United Nations S/PV.6362

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6362nd meeting

Tuesday, 20 July 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Ćolaković
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Turkey	Mr. Müftüoğlu
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea (S/2010/327)

Letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/372)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-45706 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea (S/2010/327)

Letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/372)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Miss Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), Mr. Desta (Eritrea) and Mr. Dhakkar (Somalia) took seats at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/327, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea, and document S/2010/372, which contains a letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/291, which contains a letter dated 7 June 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and document S/2010/350, which contains a letter dated 30 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing a by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Pascoe: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to present to the Security Council the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/327) on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of resolution 1907 (2009) of 23 December 2009.

Members will recall that in that resolution the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report within 180 days on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of the resolution relating to the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The other aspects of the resolution, relating to Somalia, will be best addressed by the newly established Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. May I note at the outset that in preparing this statement and the report before the Council, we have consulted with the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Qatar.

As members are aware, the dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea erupted in March 2008 following Eritrea's deployment of troops and military equipment in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, two localities adjoining the de facto Djibouti-Eritrea border. Despite conflicting colonial agreements on the precise position of the borderline, Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island were administered by Djibouti up until the eruption of hostilities between the two countries.

The most recent development during this period is the agreement signed by Eritrea and Djibouti on 6 June 2010, under the auspices of the State of Qatar. In the agreement, the two States decided to resolve, through a negotiated settlement, their border conflict. The agreement mandates the State of Qatar to establish

a mechanism that would facilitate the demarcation, by an international company, of the common border between Djibouti and Eritrea. The agreement further provides for the State of Qatar to monitor the border and address the question of prisoners of war and missing persons.

In a letter dated 9 July addressed to the Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of the State of Qatar informed us that Eritrean troops have withdrawn from the areas of Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, and the State of Qatar has deployed military observers pending a final settlement, which both parties agreed would be final and binding. The letter further stated that the withdrawal of the two forces from the border and border areas was completed on 5 June 2010. The Government of the State of Qatar deployed a company unit in the State of Eritrea as of 31 May 2010 and a platoon-size unit in the Republic of Djibouti as of 4 June 2010. The Government of Qatar has confirmed to us that cooperation between both countries and the Qatari forces is good, and the Qatari forces will remain deployed in both countries until the dispute between them has been settled.

The Secretary-General has remained engaged on this issue and offered the services of the United Nations should the parties and the State of Qatar need them. On 24 June 2010, the Secretary-General received a letter from President Isaias Afwerki which reiterated the Government of Eritrea's positions on issues of peace and security in the Horn of Africa region, including on Security Council resolution 1907 (2009).

The letter stated that lack of a final resolution on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute remains the underlying source of instability in the region. It makes reference to the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission in 2002 and the lack of progress in its implementation. It further stated that the State of Qatar was engaged in an initiative to resolve any misunderstandings between Djibouti and Eritrea.

In his reply to President Afwerki's letter, the Secretary-General reaffirmed his commitment to dialoguing with him and his government on the regional challenges raised in his letter. He also reiterated his belief that durable peace and stability in the region require the constructive engagement of all regional stakeholders, including Eritrea. He also stated that a comprehensive approach needs to be taken to effectively address the conflicts in the Horn of Africa, including through the settlement of the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In conclusion, first, we commend the recent concrete steps taken by Eritrea and Djibouti on the border issue, with the active mediation efforts of the State of Qatar. The Secretary-General has offered the technical support of the United Nations, should it be requested.

Secondly, it is our belief that the States in the Horn of Africa region, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Africa Union and the United Nations must work together to effectively address the interlinked conflicts in the region, including in Somalia, and the long-standing border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Lastly, with the recent appointment of the members of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea on 1 July, we urge all States and other parties involved to facilitate their work. We look forward to the Monitoring Group's independent reporting on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of relevant resolutions.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Desta (Eritrea): I wish to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July, and I wish to thank you and the members of the Council for according my delegation the opportunity to share its views on the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa".

Before I address its substance, let me take this opportunity also to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/327) and its reflection of most of the important developments in our region and some of the concerns of my country. Since Eritrea has already submitted its views on the contents of the report of the Secretary-General, I will limit my intervention to three specific issues: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Djibouti-Eritrea, and Somalia. Each issue is distinct from the others, yet they are all linked by history and geography. It goes without saying that such ties go far beyond the countries mentioned.

The pacific settlement of disputes among nations is one of the core principles on which the United Nations was founded. In this connection, I wish to commend the Secretary-General for pointing out the need to resolve the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute, which was peacefully, legally and technically concluded by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. However, the non-implementation of the Commission's rulings continues to impede collective and common approaches to some of the serious problems of the region, not to mention the huge sacrifices it demands of the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Eritrea-Ethiopia issue is indeed centred on the occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories by Ethiopia, and it must be dealt with in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and other relevant provisions of international law. This violation needs the urgent attention of the Council and should not be treated differently than others of a similar nature. Let me state frankly that, for the past eight years, the Security Council has declined to address Ethiopia's defiance of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's final and binding delimitation award of 13 April 2002 and the demarcation decision of November 2007.

Ethiopia's refusal to honour its obligation and its act of arming, training, hosting and financing Eritrean armed elements with the objective of destabilizing Eritrea should not be allowed to continue without a reaction and action on the part of the Security Council. Issues of peace and security must be addressed in a fair and objective way, as the United Nations Charter dictates. The Eritrea-Ethiopia issue was on the agenda of the Security Council for many years, from 1998 until the Council decided to end the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea by resolution 1827 (2008) of 30 July 2008.

Recalling that, under paragraph 6 of that resolution, the Council decided to remain actively seized of the matter, I wish to once again urge the Security Council to discharge its responsibility in a manner consistent with its mandate under the United Nations Charter in order to ensure Ethiopia's withdrawal of its troops from sovereign Eritrean territories.

Somalia continues to be the most difficult crisis to resolve in the African region, and that may continue to be the case until the Somalis are allowed to rise to the challenge of the day, which requires determination and a shared vision of a united and stable Somalia. For this to materialize, greater emphasis should be placed on opening a political space that would allow all Somali key actors to engage in meaningful and peaceful discussions. Eritrea will continue to work with the international community in seeking a sustainable peace in Somalia. It was in this spirit that Eritrea participated in the Istanbul Conference on Somalia by accepting the gracious invitation extended to it by the Government of Turkey and the United Nations in order to end the suffering of the Somalis.

Eritrea believes that the efforts of the international community should be guided by certain principles. First, there can be no military solution to the conflict in Somalia. Secondly, the only real prospect for a lasting resolution of the Somali problem lies in an inclusive political process. Thirdly, a lasting solution for Somalia can only be the outcome of a Somali-owned and Somali-driven process. As demonstrated during the Istanbul Conference, Eritrea shall engage officials of the Transitional Federal Government and other key actors. Eritrea shall remain part of a sustained and constructive effort to achieve peace and stability in Somalia.

On Djibouti, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the agreement signed by the Governments of Eritrea and Djibouti under the leadership of the Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, was a significant development. Ever since the issue of Djibouti-Eritrea was brought to the attention of the Security Council, Eritrea has exercised restraint and opted for the matter to be addressed in a calm and quiet manner, preferably at the bilateral level or through a third party acceptable to both sides, taking into account the sisterly relationship of the two countries and the need to ensure peace and security in the subregion. In this context, Eritrea is pleased by the Qatari mediation to restore and cultivate good-neighbourly relations with Djibouti on the basis of full respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Finally, notwithstanding resolution 1907 (2009), which was imposed on Eritrea unjustly and selectively by lumping unrelated issues together, my delegation remains committed to regional peace and security. Eritrea takes issues of peace and security very seriously and it will not be discouraged or deterred

from participating in meaningful and fruitful discussions that contribute concretely to sustainable peace in its region.

In light of the steps taken by Eritrea, together with Djibouti, under the auspices of Qatar's diplomatic efforts, and of Eritrea's firm commitment to peace efforts in Somalia, my delegation appeals to the Security Council to lift the sanctions regime imposed on Eritrea.

Let me also express my country's deep grief over the recent bombing in Kampala, Uganda, which claimed several innocent lives, including those of six Eritreans, and many wounded.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Miss Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to offer my delegation's congratulations to your country on its outstanding leadership in the presidency of the Security Council. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing, as well as the members of the Security Council who have given my delegation the opportunity to take part in this discussion on peace and security in Africa.

The facts described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/327) show that the efforts of Council members and the measures they have taken, in particular through the adoption of resolutions 1862 (2009) in January 2009 and 1907 (2009) in December 2009, have contributed very clearly to the changes that have taken place on the ground within only a few months. My Government is convinced that, without the resolve of Council members, it is not certain that the report before the Council would have had the same tenor. In fact, since 2008 — when Eritrea launched a surprise war against my country — Council members have borne witness to the unfolding of events and will recall Eritrea's ongoing denial of the very existence of the conflict.

It is undeniable that the adoption of resolution 1907 (2009) was decisive to the protracted process that has led to the situation under discussion here today. My Government welcomes the fact that its repeated appeals to Council members have finally been heeded.

My Government welcomes the developments on the ground described in the report and would like to reach a final and lasting solution to the border dispute generated by Eritrea two years ago. My Government also appreciates and welcomes the mediation of the authorities of Qatar and is ready to work closely with them to peacefully resolve the dispute with Eritrea.

My Government has faith in the leadership of the brotherly country of Qatar and is convinced that it will lead us to a good solution. While the beginnings are encouraging, the road before us is long and will require a tireless and serious commitment on the part of us all in the months to come, because the matters to be discussed are sensitive. As noted by Mr. Pascoe, these issues include prisoners of war, missing persons and border demarcation and delimitation.

Before concluding, I welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, who has spared no effort and has always offered his good offices. We hope that future developments will allow his next report to have the same positive tone. My country, as always, is ready to work for peace in the region and in the world.

I would like to conclude by extending the most sincere condolences of my Government to the sister Republic of Uganda for the attacks that took place on its soil by Somali extremists.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.35 a.m.

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Wednesday, 21 July 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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10-45871 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Shalev (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 July 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which has been issued as document S/2010/391 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council that will be held on Wednesday, 21 July 2010, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 16 July 2010 from His Excellency Mr. Paul Badji, in which he requests to be invited, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Paul Badji.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Badji to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, in which he requests to be invited, in his capacity as acting head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Serrano to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Lynn Pascoe. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: We are once again at a critical juncture in the effort to move to serious Israeli-

Palestinian negotiations aimed at achieving a two-State solution. These talks are essential for ending the 1967 occupation and the conflict and for resolving all core issues between the parties, including Jerusalem, borders, refugees, security, settlements and water, as prescribed in the resolutions of the Council and agreements between the parties.

Six rounds of proximity talks have now been facilitated by United States Envoy Mitchell, and both President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu have visited Washington, D.C. President Abbas, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Special Envoy Mitchell each met Egyptian President Mubarak in Cairo on 18 July. The Secretary-General met Prime Minister Netanyahu in New York on 7 July, and Special Coordinator Serry saw President Abbas in Ramallah earlier today.

It remains the shared goal of the Quartet to bring about direct negotiations facilitated by the United States as soon as possible. This should take place in a framework of respect by the parties of their obligations as well as the requisite commitments regarding negotiations. Intensive discussions are continuing. I note that the Arab League follow-up committee is due to meet on 29 July to review progress. We urge the parties not to miss the current opportunity to make progress in these talks and to move to direct negotiations with active third-party involvement and close Quartet support.

On 20 June, the Government of Israel announced a package of measures aimed at easing the blockade on Gaza. The Quartet welcomed this announcement while restating its overall goals for Gaza and expressed the hope that the package would contribute to the fulfilment of resolution 1860 (2009), including for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. The United Nations and the Quartet are following closely the implementation of these measures.

On 5 July 2010, as a first step — which the Secretary-General welcomed — the Government of Israel switched from a positive list of goods allowed into Gaza to a negative list of goods whose entry is prohibited or restricted. Under the new guidelines, anything that may be used as military material, including so-called dual-use goods and items, continues to be subject to specific, exceptional permission to enter Gaza. Construction items and materials are to be allowed entry only for projects authorized by the Palestinian Authority and implemented by the international community.

Since the announcement of the new policy, new food and productive items have entered Gaza and the volume of imports into Gaza has increased steadily. A weekly average of 780 truckloads entered during the reporting period — a 40 per cent increase compared to the weekly average in 2010 prior to the announcement. Approvals have also been given for a number of additional United Nations projects in the vital areas of education and health.

While these are positive steps, we hope they can be enhanced to address the deplorable conditions in the Strip. Further measures need to be taken to enable exports and movements of people and to streamline procedures for project approval. Our goal remains the full opening of land crossings, in the framework of the Agreement on Movement and Access.

The situation in Gaza has been compounded by the electricity crisis. Given the internal disputes over revenue collection and funding for fuel for the Gaza power plant, the plant's output has declined steadily. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) is active between the Palestinian Authority and the de facto authorities in Gaza to urge a Palestinian solution to this problem.

The Rafah border crossing with Egypt has remained open since 2 June, and there has been a significant increase in the number of people allowed to cross for humanitarian purposes. Egypt continues its efforts to counter smuggling across the border with Gaza.

I am pleased to report that arrangements agreed by UNSCO to ensure that the cargo of the Turkish vessels in the 31 May convoy reaches its beneficiaries in Gaza are being implemented, and agreement has been reached to effect similar arrangements for the cargo of the *Rachel Corrie*. The Libyan-sponsored vessel that sailed on 12 July with aid for Gaza arrived in an Egyptian port without incident. Arrangements are being made by the Egyptian Government to transfer the material into Gaza. I would like to point out that such convoys are not helpful in resolving the basic economic problems in Gaza, and they needlessly carry the potential for escalation.

The Government of Israel has initiated investigations into the 31 May incident. A military investigative committee headed by former National Security Adviser Eiland has issued its report. A public commission headed by Justice Tirkel, in which two Israeli-nominated internationals are participating as observers, is under way. The Security Council has called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards. The Secretary-General continues to be in contact with the parties involved to gain agreement for his proposal for an international panel of inquiry that would be based on domestic inquiries.

Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit has entered his fifth year in captivity. We call again for his immediate release. The fact that there has been no humanitarian access is inexcusable. We also note the detention of over 9,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails. We urge the completion of a prisoner exchange agreement, as well as releases of Palestinian prisoners to the Palestinian Authority.

The reporting period saw a lack of progress in intra-Palestinian reconciliation based on the Egyptian-mediated proposal. We restate our full support for unification of Gaza with the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority.

The Secretary-General condemned the cowardly attack on 28 June by militant elements in Gaza on a children's camp run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This is the second attack against such a facility in a month. It is crucial that there be respect for, and no interference with, United Nations operations on the ground, and we reiterate the responsibility of the de facto authorities in this regard. We are also concerned by reports of political arrests by the de facto Hamas authorities.

On 12 July, Special Coordinator Serry and the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women visited Gaza to meet with representatives of women and reaffirm the importance of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

During the reporting period, Palestinian militant groups fired 41 rockets and mortars into southern Israel, causing no injuries. The Israel Defense Forces conducted 6 air strikes and 21 incursions, killing 4 Gazans, including 1 alleged militant, and injuring 23. Citing security concerns, the Israeli security forces continue to restrict Palestinian access to areas close to the border with Israel by opening warning fire on people entering this area, killing 1 person and injuring 18, including 4 children, during the reporting period.

We continue to closely follow developments in Jerusalem. In 2006, four Jerusalemite lawmakers from the Hamas-affiliated Change and Reform bloc were charged with not fulfilling the minimum loyalty to the State of Israel, stripped of their Jerusalem resident status and handed prison sentences of up to four years, which they have now served. Following their recent release, they were given 30 days to leave East Jerusalem. Court proceedings are continuing. I wish to stress that the prospect of expulsion of Palestinian legislators from their home city would be a serious step backwards and would undermine the hopes of making political progress.

Notwithstanding comparative restraint on the ground in East Jerusalem in recent months, on 12 July the Jerusalem municipality approved the construction of 32 new apartments in an East Jerusalem settlement. On 13 July the municipality demolished six Palestinian structures in East Jerusalem, displacing 26 people, including 14 children. We have repeatedly stated that the international community does not recognize Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and that the Fourth Geneva Convention is applicable. The future of Jerusalem remains to be determined in final status negotiations, and a way must be found for the city to emerge as the capital of two States.

The 10-month moratorium on West Bank settlements construction is largely being observed, but it is set to expire on 26 September. We call for the moratorium to be extended and expanded to cover all settlement activity throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem. No further steps have been taken towards dismantlement of settlement outposts erected since March 2001. During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished a total of 106 structures in area C of the West Bank. We reiterate the Quartet's call on 19 March in Moscow for the parties to implement their obligations under the Road Map and international law.

The barrier, constructed in deviation from the Green Line and in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, continues to pose significant challenges to movement of Palestinians in the West Bank. Despite efforts to ease

restrictions on movement and access, the number of obstacles in the West Bank remained at 505 during the reporting period.

Palestinian security forces continued to maintain law and order and to fight extremism in the West Bank during the reporting period, in furtherance of Road Map commitments. During this period, the Israeli security forces conducted 376 incursions into the West Bank, resulting in 74 Palestinians injured and 322 arrested, while 11 members of the Israeli security forces were injured. In demonstrations against the barrier, dozens of Palestinians and peace activists were injured, arrested or suffered from gas inhalation.

There were 21 violent clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank during the reporting period, in which three Palestinians were injured and/or suffered damages to their property. In several separate incidents in the past two months, Israeli settlers used their vehicles to run over and injure or kill Palestinians. Settlers were also injured by stones thrown at their vehicles.

I am pleased to report that according to the preliminary growth figures for the first quarter of 2010 released by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, gross domestic product in the occupied Palestinian territory increased by 12.5 per cent, as compared to the first quarter of 2009. To ensure that the enabling reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority are not undermined, continued external financing to support the Authority's recurrent budgetary needs is critical.

There were tensions in the occupied Syrian Golan during the reporting period. On 11 July Israeli policemen conducting a search operation were surrounded by a large crowd. In the course of events, there were reports that more than 40 civilian residents of the Golan suffered from tear gas inhalation and that three Israeli police cars were damaged. Settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Golan continued throughout the reporting period. During this period an Israeli bill that would require a referendum before any withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan passed a committee reading.

Turning now to Lebanon, where the situation remains stable, allow me to recall that the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on 14 July on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Since the tensions in southern Lebanon earlier this month, the situation has remained quiet. Throughout the month, Israeli aerial violations continued. Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri visited Damascus on 18 July 2010, when he led a large ministerial delegation to discuss bilateral affairs. The two Governments signed 17 agreements covering various aspects of cooperation between the two countries.

The Lebanese Parliament has continued discussions on draft legislation on the civil rights of Palestinian refugees. Consensus appears to be within reach, and the United Nations would welcome this as a first step. The United Nations has also focused on the need to ease restrictions on access to the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp. Reconstruction of the camp continues, and the return of the first 2,000 residents is expected by the end of the year. I urge donors to continue to provide vital financial assistance to UNRWA.

In the period ahead, we must work to bring the parties into direct talks without delay on a basis that gives confidence in the possibility of genuine progress on the core issues and on the ground, including restraint in Jerusalem, implementation of Road Map obligations on settlements and further measures to empower the Palestinian Authority. We must ensure that policy change towards Gaza is fully implemented and followed with further steps. And we must place these efforts in their larger regional context and reinvigorate the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour: Madam President, I warmly congratulate you and your friendly country, Nigeria, on your presidency of the Security Council this month. We express our appreciation to Mexico for its very skilled guidance of the Council's agenda last month.

I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing. In that connection, I wish to express our appreciation to the United Nations, including the Secretary-General, Mr. Serry, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and all the agencies that have been working so hard on the ground during this period, including with regard to securing the delivery of humanitarian aid from the Gaza freedom flotilla and other ships to the Palestinian people in Gaza. We also express our appreciation to the United Nations for its unwavering calls for the full lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Three months ago we came before the Council, in its last open debate on this subject (6298th meeting), compelled to draw attention to the extremely difficult situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of Israel's ongoing aggression, colonization and provocation against the Palestinian people and their land. While we had hoped to inform the Council of progress in the United States-mediated proximity talks and of improvement on the ground, today we regretfully report that the situation remains volatile, due to Israeli actions. It is a situation requiring immediate redress if we are not to lose the opportunity before us for attaining peace. The alternative is to allow tensions to continue to rise, igniting another cycle of violence that will do further harm to the possibility for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and cause more suffering, insecurity and instability.

For some, it seems strange that such a volatile situation persists in light of the international and regional efforts being exerted for a revival of the peace process. Those efforts have raised hopes in the region and throughout the globe and are being followed closely, with all hoping that the problems that have historically plagued and undermined the peace process can finally be overcome.

The proximity talks were supported by the Palestinian leadership, the Arab countries and the international community as a means to bridge the gaps that remain between the two sides. That those gaps remain is due to Israel's refusal to comply with its legal obligations and its Road Map commitment to cease all settlement activities, including so-called natural growth, which, we are all aware, constitute a major obstacle to the peace process. We reiterate that such cessation is essential for the resumption of a credible process aimed at achieving a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

We believe that the proximity talks would serve to reaffirm the fundamental principles and agreed terms of reference of the peace process and to clarify respective obligations and the status of their fulfilment, including with regard to previous agreements and understandings reached and commitments undertaken in the context of the Annapolis process under international auspices. While a strong international consensus exists in support of the agreed terms of reference — including among the Arab countries, which remain committed to the Arab Peace Initiative — it is clear that Israel continues to refuse to adhere to those terms of reference and commitments and, in fact, continues to carry out policies undermining them.

We believe that the active engagement and mediation of the United States, as reflected in the dedicated efforts of Senator Mitchell as well as by President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton, would compel Israel, for the sake of peace and security, to finally comply with these obligations and commitments, including a settlement freeze. That, in turn, would help build the trust and confidence necessary for a resumption of direct negotiations on the core final status issues — Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, water and security.

The Palestinian side has thus engaged in the talks in good faith. Over and over again, the Palestinian leadership has affirmed its commitment to peace and its willingness to engage in the talks to pave the way for a return to direct negotiations aimed at the achievement of a just and lasting settlement. This commitment has been reflected in both words and deeds and is attested to in numerous multilateral and bilateral reports and meetings, including with regard to the positive and proactive Palestinian State-building programme and efforts to promote law, order and security.

The same cannot be said for Israel. On the contrary, Israel has repeatedly challenged those talks with illegal and reckless actions. It has been the same dysfunctional and destructive pattern since the start of the peace process almost 20 years ago, of Israeli intransigence and arrogant ruses aimed at circumventing its obligations, and shocking acts of aggression and illegal policies that are causing serious harm to the Palestinian civilian population and to the contiguity, unity and integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, sabotaging the peace process.

There is an extremely wide gap between Israel's words and deeds that must be obvious to all. While Israel professes to want peace, all of its actions are absolutely to the contrary. Unlawful and provocative Israeli policies and actions, both by the Israeli occupying forces and by the Israeli settlers, continue to inflame tensions and sensitivities on the ground and throughout the region. This, in turn, is casting a dark shadow on the efforts to resume the peace process, raising grave doubts about Israel's credibility as a peace partner and its willingness to abide by legal obligations and commitments. What we are witnessing is an Israeli Government that speaks facetiously of peace on the international stage while it simultaneously carries out its illegal schemes aimed at imposing a fait accompli prior to conclusion of a peace settlement, making a mockery of the efforts being exerted in this regard by all parties concerned.

In the two-month period since the proximity talks began, Israel has persisted with its illegal measures on a broad scale, in some instances even intensifying them, including by continuing settlement and wall construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, despite the unwavering international calls for complete cessation and Israel's own so-called moratorium. It also continues to impose the punitive blockade on the Gaza Strip, despite widespread international condemnation and calls for its full lifting, which heightened in the aftermath of Israel's attack on the humanitarian flotilla. Israel continues to impede the efforts aimed at lifting the blockade and allowing for sustained and regular movement of persons and goods and for the long-overdue reconstruction process to begin.

Over 900 military incursions in the West Bank and several raids against the Gaza Strip were carried out by the occupying forces during this period. At least six Palestinian civilians were killed and more than 120 injured in Israeli attacks, including the killing of a 16 year-old boy and a 59 year-old woman by Israeli settlers. Settler terror, in particular, continued unabated. Threats of deportation have continued against Palestinian civilians, including four elected Palestinian legislators from Jerusalem, who are among the hundreds of Palestinian Jerusalemites whose residency rights have been revoked or that Israel is threatening to revoke.

Demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem has also continued, with several more homes destroyed and families made homeless and displaced as part of the illegal campaign to empty the city of its indigenous residents. Final approval for the demolition of 22 Palestinian homes in the Al Bustan area of Silwan for the building of a so-called park was also announced during this period. Tens of other demolition orders have also been issued, including for a school, and there are reports of intentions to issue demolition orders for up to 40 buildings, comprising at least 100 homes, in the Issawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

More than 380 Palestinians were arrested several hundred others detained, especially at checkpoints and including children, adding to the thousands of Palestinian civilians still in Israeli jails and detention centres.

Incitement by Israeli officials and settlers has continued, including threats to launch military assaults in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as against other countries in the region, and ongoing threats against ships attempting to break the Gaza blockade, despite the disastrous aftermath of Israel's attack on the Turkish aid ship and its killing of nine civilians. In this regard, we continue to join the calls for a full, independent, credible, international investigation, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, into that Israeli attack.

Despite its claimed commitment to peace, Israel has not ceased these actions — not even for a moment — in violation of its legal obligations and in defiance of international calls for their cessation. This situation has seriously hampered progress in the proximity talks and undermined the credibility of any kind of peace process.

What was set out to be accomplished during the current talks, has thus far not been accomplished. Moreover, everything that has occurred in the meanwhile on the Israeli side has been the stark antithesis of that required for a peaceful settlement in accordance with the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the parameters that are well known to all of us and firmly internationally supported and endorsed.

The solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is before us and has been for decades. And, yet, the international community once again seems at a loss as to how to act collectively to justly and finally resolve this long-festering conflict. The bold measures that must be

taken to implement the relevant resolutions of this Council, which provide the basis for any just, lasting and comprehensive peace, remain to be taken. Israel's impunity continues to trump the efforts to shore up the necessary political will to take those bold measures needed to promote the resumption of a credible and fair peace process and advance the cause of international peace and security, which this conflict unquestionably directly harms.

What needs to happen for the Security Council to finally rise to its responsibility to bring an end to this brutal military occupation that has denied the Palestinian people their inalienable rights, denied them a life of freedom and dignity in their homeland, and totally destabilized an entire region, making peace and security elusive for millions and millions of people for more than half a century? We have reiterated on numerous occasions that time is of the essence and that its passage is not in favour of the realization of the two-State solution, which continues to be threatened by illegal Israeli attempts to alter the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and forcibly de facto annex even more Palestinian land, prior to any final settlement being reached.

Faced with this ongoing challenge, it is high time that the international community, with the Security Council and Quartet at the forefront, ceases to appease Israel and genuinely consider the collective actions that must be taken to bring it into compliance with its legal obligations and to salvage the two-State solution and advance the realization thereof within an accelerated time frame.

I reaffirm today that, despite the harsh reality that prevails on all fronts, the Palestinian leadership remains fully committed to peace and to engaging in a credible peace process based on the agreed terms of reference, with the aim of definitively bringing an end to the Israeli occupation in order to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination in their independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, and achieving a just resolution of the plight of the Palestine refugees in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Ms. Shalev (Israel): Madam President, allow me to commend you for your able stewardship of the Security Council this month. Let me also thank Mr. Lynn Pasco, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his informative briefing.

Almost two years ago, I came to New York to represent the Israel that I know and love: a vibrant, democratic State that shares the noble values enumerated in the Charter of the United Nations. That is precisely why I have sat in this Council time and again to declare Israel's commitment to peace. For words are the father of action; declarations of peace are the precursors of peace.

Hence, Israel calls for direct negotiations between us and the Palestinians — no preconditions, no delays. With Jerusalem and Ramallah only 10 minutes apart, direct negotiations are the only path to bridge the existing gaps. In anticipation of such direct talks, our partners and our neighbours have an essential role: to embrace the language of peace and coexistence and to reject one-sided narratives. And so I ask, how many times in this Chamber have our neighbours recognized Israel's right to exist as the homeland for the Jewish people, or condemned Hamas terrorism and violence against Israeli civilians, or spoken out against those who call for us to be wiped off the map? Not once. The silence is deafening.

As we seek a way forward in our region, we applaud the important work of Senator George Mitchell on behalf of United States President Barack Obama. Senator Mitchell works to achieve our shared vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, one Jewish, one Palestinian. Despite this important work and progress towards direct negotiations, there exists a dangerous phenomenon in our region. So-called activists, under the guise of humanitarian aid, support terrorist forces in our region, particularly in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. The organizers of such efforts in Gaza — with the cooperation of Hamas and others who oppose peace — are fully aware of the internationally recognized and unimpeded channels for delivering aid to the Gaza Strip. They are aware of the good offices available to them if they truly desire to assist the people of Gaza. Yet these provocateurs seek nothing but confrontation. They choose violence, escalation and instant media headlines in an effort to delegitimize Israel.

As we just heard from Mr. Pascoe, the phenomenon of flotillas to Gaza is not conducive to efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. Indeed, in this respect I wish to share with the Council Israel's deep concern regarding new reports of yet another flotilla departing from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip. We call upon the international community to exert its influence on the organizers of this provocative action. We also call on the Government of Lebanon to demonstrate its responsibility to prevent this from happening.

In Lebanon, the terrorist organization Hizbullah continues to build its military infrastructure and embed it into the civilian population. Transfers of sophisticated weapons from Syria and Iran to Hizbullah systematically violate the arms embargo. At the same time, this terrorist group continues to place increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons within villages, adjacent to schools, hospitals and civilian homes. This is a blatant violation of international law and basic dictates of humanity.

Just as alarming, recent confrontations in southern Lebanon between the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and so-called Lebanese civilians reflect Hizbullah's efforts to redeploy its forces and further harass and assault the critical work of UNIFIL. These most recent clashes against UNIFIL are a direct violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and a challenge to the members of the Security Council. In this respect, Israel commends the Security Council for meeting on 9 July to address these most recent confrontations. Hizbullah's provocations must not go unanswered by the Council. The Security Council has repeatedly and clearly stipulated that this terrorist organization must disarm and disband.

As we seek a way forward, certain basic principles must emerge. The first is security. Israel's security will never be compromised by us. We must all recognize that since the advent of peace talks, the threats facing Israel have grown more diverse and dangerous: the rockets of Iranian proxies Hamas and Hizbullah, global terrorism and the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran.

In direct negotiations, we stand prepared to take political risks for peace. We have taken a major step with respect to Israel's policy towards the closure of Gaza. As we heard from Under-Secretary-General Pascoe, all goods that are not weapons or materiel for warlike purposes are now entering Gaza. Beyond Gaza, we have worked with the Palestinian Authority to build a flourishing economy in the West Bank.

The second principle is that we must look towards a definitive end to the conflict that involves mutual recognition. A request that Israel recognize a Palestinian State as the nation-State of the Palestinian people must be met with an acknowledgement that Israel is the nation-State of the Jewish people. Through such mutual recognition, we can take tangible steps towards promoting coexistence, eliminating incitement and combating terrorism. Through such mutual recognition, courageous decisions can be made for the sake of peace. Through such mutual recognition, we can speak with each other, not past one another or through intermediaries.

Before concluding, my comments today would be incomplete without expressing our ongoing deep concern that Gilad Shalit has remained deprived of his most basic human rights, including any visit from the Red Cross, for more than four years. Israel expects the international community to do all in its power — more than has been done thus far — to bring about the swift release of Gilad Shalit.

Peace is not merely a signed document. It is a set of values that allow us all to live our lives in security and with hope — Israelis and Palestinian alike.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Ms. Anderson (United States of America): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders have continued to engage in proximity talks, with the help of Special Envoy George Mitchell. The gaps have narrowed, and we believe there are opportunities to narrow them further in direct talks, which we encourage the parties to begin as soon as possible. Special Envoy Mitchell was in the region again this week to continue this process. Based on President Obama's recent meetings in Washington with President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu, we believe that we have an opportunity to make progress towards Middle East peace, which can ultimately be achieved only through direct negotiations, and we urge all concerned to work with us towards this goal.

Only through good-faith negotiations can the parties mutually agree on an outcome that ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable State based on the 1967 lines, with agreed swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish State with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meets Israeli security requirements. We should all seek to assist the parties as they make the hard choices necessary for lasting peace and do nothing to hinder them.

The United States has welcomed the new policy towards Gaza announced by the Government of Israel, which responds to the calls of many in the international community. Israel's 5 July announcement of a list of controlled items for Gaza is an important step towards successful implementation of this new policy. With this change, the flow of goods and material into Gaza should significantly improve, along with the access that the people of Gaza have to those items.

We are already seeing progress, with an expansion of both the scope and the quantity of goods entering Gaza through the crossings. We welcome these increases and expect the number of truckloads to continue to rise in the days and weeks ahead. These arrangements should improve conditions for the people in Gaza while preventing the entry of weapons for Hamas. We urge all those wishing to deliver goods to do so through established channels so that their cargo can be inspected and transferred via land crossings into Gaza, to ensure that Israel's legitimate security needs are addressed even as the Palestinians' humanitarian needs are met.

Hamas interference with international assistance and with the work of non-governmental organizations continues to seriously complicate efforts in Gaza. On 28 June, for example, an armed band of masked men attacked and destroyed one of the sites of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) summer games for children in Gaza. This was the second such attack in a month, another craven attempt to impose an extremist viewpoint on Gaza's population.

We commend UNRWA for conducting a programme that promotes human rights and tolerance and that serves as a viable alternative to Hamas camps that promote radicalism and violence. Continued arms smuggling by Hamas and its commitment to terrorism undermine security and prosperity for Palestinians and Israelis alike. And Hamas continues to hold captive the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, whom it abducted in 2006. We call again for his immediate release.

In its 1 June statement on the Gaza flotilla incident (S/PRST/2010/9), the Council expressed support for the proximity talks, urged the parties to act with restraint, avoiding any unilateral or provocative actions, and called on all international partners to promote an atmosphere of cooperation between the parties and throughout the region.

We urge the international community to shun unilateral action and confrontation and instead undertake conciliatory steps that promote cooperation between the parties.

We call on all parties to act responsibly to meet the recovery needs of the people of Gaza and to rebuild Gaza's civilian private sector, which will be the engine of Gaza's recovery.

In this context, Israel, like any nation, should be allowed to undertake an investigation into events that involve its national security. Israel is capable of conducting a serious and credible investigation, and the structure and terms of reference of the independent public commission on the Gaza flotilla can meet the standard of a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation. We will prejudge neither the process nor its outcome, and we will await the conduct and findings of the investigation before drawing further conclusions.

The United States has expressed its concern about the reports of Israeli Government actions in Jerusalem, including the demolition of a number of buildings in East Jerusalem. We have urged all parties to avoid actions that could undermine trust, and we continue to oppose unilateral actions that prejudge negotiations on the status of Jerusalem, which, like all other permanent status issues, must be resolved by the parties through negotiations.

Let me conclude by noting our firm and abiding commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence and thus to the full implementation of the Council's resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is integral not only to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) but also to maintaining calm along the Blue Line. The United States fully supports UNIFIL, and we commend the

active role it plays in ensuring the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). We call on all parties to preserve UNIFIL's freedom of movement within its area of operations, and we strongly support its mission.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I too am grateful to Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his comprehensive briefing. I would also like to thank Ambassador Mansour and Ambassador Shalev for their respective statements.

As all of us agree, the only way to achieve durable peace in the Middle East is through sincere negotiations in good faith between the parties concerned. We support the effort by the United States to pursue proximity talks between the parties with a view to starting direct negotiations. We hope that these efforts will produce progress as early as possible.

The negotiations should achieve a two-State solution by ending the 1967 occupation of territories, including East Jerusalem. Japan supports the plan of the Palestinian Authority to build a Palestinian State within 24 months. Japan will continue to extend assistance and help build capacity for the Palestinian people and institutions for the Palestinian State.

Both parties must carry out their obligations and commitments under the Road Map. We reiterate the call on the Israeli Government to freeze all settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We deplore the recent razing of Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem by the Israeli authorities. Any act that could prejudge the final status negotiations should not be taken.

At the same time, we call upon the Palestinian Authority to continue its efforts to improve security and fulfil its commitment to cease violence and work against incitement. Both sides need to build mutual trust, to move from proximity talks to direct negotiations and to refrain from taking any action that undermines trust, which is essential for such a transition. Neither the parties, nor the peoples, nor the international community can afford to turn away from serious confidence-building efforts.

On Gaza, the announcement by the Israeli Government on easing restrictions on civilian goods in Gaza is a very positive step. We hope that the Israeli authorities will make further efforts to improve the lives of people in Gaza.

We call for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009), including preventing illicit trafficking in arms and stopping rockets from being fired into Israel. We support efforts facilitating intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

Regarding the investigation into the Gaza flotilla incident, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General, which we strongly hope will contribute to making the investigation consistent with the principles contained in the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9).

Japan will make every effort to help the parties achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his update on recent developments in the Middle East.

We also thank the Permanent Representative of Israel, Her Excellency Ms. Gabriela Shalev, and the Permanent Observer of Palestine, His Excellency Mr. Riyad Mansour, for their presence and their contributions to our debate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains deeply concerned by the extremely worrying impasse that persists in the peace process in the Middle East. The pattern of events in the region in recent months is a strong reminder that the situation on the ground continues to be a source of great concern. Recent events further demonstrated that the counterproductive and unacceptable blockade of Gaza represents a grave obstacle to security, prosperity and opportunity for the Palestinians and the Israelis, and for all nations in the region.

In this regard, we welcome the Israeli Government's recent announcement, which, once fully and effectively implemented, will be a significant step forward in the review of Israeli policy on Gaza. However, we strongly believe that this is not enough and that more needs to be done. Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the view that only the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) can meet the basic needs of the 1.5 million Palestinian residents in the Gaza Strip. Hence, we reiterate our call upon Israel to allow the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of the crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods

and persons to and from Gaza, in accordance with resolution 1860 (2009) and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

Time and again, we have to reiterate that comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East can be achieved only on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Road Map, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. Bosnia and Herzegovina is and will remain committed to the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

In order to overcome the current peace process impasse, the parties have to fulfil their obligations and make a tangible contribution towards creating conditions conducive to negotiations. Settlements, the separation barrier built on occupied land, the demolition of homes and evictions are illegal under international law and contrary to Israel's obligations under the Road Map. We believe that these activities constitute a major obstacle on the road to comprehensive peace because they prejudge the outcome of final status negotiations and threaten to make a two-State solution impossible. It is therefore essential that Israel put an end to all settlement activities, including natural growth, in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, and dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001.

Our concerns also include the latest developments in East Jerusalem and continuing tensions in the city. Bosnia and Herzegovina does not recognize the annexation of East Jerusalem and underlines that the status of Jerusalem is a permanent status issue that must be resolved through negotiations between the parties. Jerusalem — the holy city of the three great monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam — should be the symbol of peace, freedom of religious expression and human rights.

Israel's security concerns, including a complete stop to all violence and arms smuggling into Gaza, must also be addressed. Bosnia and Herzegovina condemns the latest attack on the children's recreational facility in Gaza. We call upon Hamas to unconditionally allow the International Committee of the Red Cross access and to end its interference with the operations of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies in Gaza.

Regarding the recent tragic incident involving the humanitarian aid flotilla, we reiterate our call for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards, in accordance with the statement of the President of the Security Council S/PRST/2010/9. At the same time, we support Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal for an international inquiry to investigate the Gaza flotilla incident.

Before concluding, allow me, once again to emphasize that only direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians can bring about a lasting resolution to the conflict and ensure peace, stability and progress in the Middle East.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his comprehensive briefing.

Israel's raid on the freedom flotilla carrying humanitarian supplies to besieged Gaza on 31 May 2010 still occupies the forefront of our Organization's attention. That aggression constituted a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the law of the sea. We reiterate that the aggression, which took place in international waters, was an act of piracy, and we agree with the statement issued by the Secretariat that the tragedy could have been avoided had Israel responded to the repeated appeals of the international community to end its blockade. Indeed, there will be no need for humanitarian aid ships to Gaza when Israel lifts its blockade of Gaza and opens the crossings.

In this connection, we would like to state the following. First, we emphasize the need for the Secretary-General to launch an urgent investigation into the actions of the Israeli navy against the freedom flotilla. It should be marked by impartiality, credibility and transparency. As emphasized in the presidential statement of 1 June 2010(S/PRST/2010/9), it should conform to international standards with a view to identifying responsibility, punishing the perpetrators of these crimes and ensuring compensation for the victims. It is unacceptable that impunity should continue in this manner.

Secondly, we stress our rejection of the unilateral Israeli investigation, which is neither credible, impartial nor transparent and does not conform to requisite international standards. Israel is the aggressor. It determined the outcome of the investigation before it

started. It invoked the right of self-defence to justify its attack on defenceless civilians. In this connection, we reiterate our demand for the lifting of the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip, which violates international norms and laws, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which enshrines the protection of civilians in time of war.

The partial closing of the border crossings to Gaza impedes freedom of movement and the delivery of humanitarian assistance and necessary commodities such as food, medicine and fuel. The blockade constitutes collective punishment of more than 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. This tragedy must unconditionally come to an end.

Once again, we condemn Israeli settlement policy, which coincides with a rabid campaign to demolish Palestinian homes and evict the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. The policy is aimed at disrupting the geographic contiguity of the Palestinian territory and thwarting the two-State solution. We would like to stress the need to follow up on the updates of the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48) transmitted by the Secretary-General to our Council.

We call on Israel to report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 64/10 of 5 November 2009, in emulation of the actions taken by Switzerland and Palestine. Israel has intentionally hampered the peace process, as proven by its lack of response to United States efforts and refusal to freeze settlement activities in East Jerusalem and the other occupied territories at a time when the Arab States are making their best efforts to facilitate the resumption of negotiations, which, we emphasize, must address the issue of a final settlement within a specified timeframe. The negotiations must not merely be a confidence-building measure.

With regard to the occupied Syrian Golan, we stress once again the need to implement resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel must withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967. We stress that any action taken by Israel to transform the legal, physical or demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan, including the expansion and building of settlements, is null and void.

On the actions undertaken in southern Lebanon early this month, I note that the Lebanese Council of Ministers held a meeting on 8 July and issued a statement recalling its firm support for maintaining the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the close and inextricable link between UNIFIL and Lebanese citizens — yes, Lebanese citizens — for decades. It emphasized the important role of UNIFIL under resolution 1701 (2006) and the need to implement all provisions of that resolution. I wonder whether Israel complies with the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). Has Israel ceased violating Lebanese sovereignty by air, land and sea? Has Israel withdrawn from the northern part of Al-Ghajar and the surrounding area? We therefore call upon the international community to put an end, once and for all, to all Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Pascoe for his substantive briefing. The situation in the Middle East remains unstable and very fragile, although with some positive aspects, above all the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian proximity talks mediated by Senator Mitchell. An opportunity remains for the resumption of direct talks between the sides, and we cannot let it slip away. In this connection, reports from Israel about plans for new construction in East Jerusalem and on recent demolitions of a number of Arab homes are a source of great concern.

Moscow continues to consider unacceptable any unilateral action that could prejudice the outcome of an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. We call on the Israeli side to show restraint in accordance with the united position of the international community on these issues, given the particular sensitivity of the problem of Jerusalem, whose fate should be decided through negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories. It is evident that, if they are to move from proximity talks to a substantive exchange of views on the key issues on the bilateral agenda, the sides must refrain from decisions and actions that could undermine efforts to build an atmosphere of trust between them.

The Middle East Quartet remains the primary instrument supporting the peace process, and the recent trip to the region by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, should be seen in that context. The Special Representatives of the Quartet continue their intense daily work, including on the ground, to achieve the objectives set by Quartet leaders at their most recent meeting in Moscow with a view to moving towards a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

We note some movement in the situation involving Gaza. Easing the embargo is a step in the right direction which we are convinced should be followed by further measures, such as restoring the conditions that existed at the conclusion of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, when representatives of the European Union and the lawful Palestinian authorities were stationed at Gaza border crossings. The ultimate goal of the international community should, of course, be the complete lifting of the blockade, while ensuring Israel's security interests.

We await additional information from the United Nations and Israel on the status of the investigation of the circumstances relating to the incident of the freedom flotilla to Gaza.

Unfortunately, one serious remaining issue is that of intra-Palestinian unity. We are conducting principled activity at all levels to support efforts to overcome differences within the Palestinian ranks. We appeal to and are seeking to convince Hamas to align itself with the platform of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab Peace Initiative, in favour of which the Quartet has repeatedly spoken out. There has been some movement in Hamas' position in this direction, and we will pursue our relevant work with that organization.

In conclusion, I again reaffirm Russia's readiness, within international forums and bilateral frameworks, to continue its efforts to contribute to a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East, a crucial element of which would be to resolve the Palestine question on a two-State basis that provides for the existence of an independent and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security. There is no other option.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing on the situation in the Middle East. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine for their statements.

The events that have taken place in recent weeks confirm once again that the international community, and the Security Council in particular, must continue to monitor the situation in the Middle East and encourage intensified negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, based on previous agreements and obligations and ongoing diplomatic efforts. That has been particularly evident following the attack on the freedom flotilla that took place in international waters on 31 May, with tragic and disturbing consequences, not only because of the clearly reprehensible facts, but also because it has yet again highlighted the fragility of the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9), which called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation of those events in accordance with international standards, remains valid. Mexico believes that the parties involved have not only the right to establish their own commissions of inquiry, but also the obligation to do so in matters that concern them.

In that regard, we note the results of the internal inquiry commission established by Israel, which were made known on 12 July. We continue to await the results of the independent public committee for more in-depth conclusions.

That not withstanding, such internal commissions cannot replace the establishment of an international commission as outlined in the Council's presidential statement; rather, they must complement it. Only thus can we create the cooperation and trust that are needed to ensure that a credible outcome of the investigations that is acceptable to the parties concerned. Hence, we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to establish a body that would meet those criteria.

At the same time, it is essential also to prevent all acts of provocation that could give rise to another incident like the one that occurred on 31 May. In that regard, any delivery of humanitarian assistance must be arranged through established channels.

We believe that the Gaza blockade is unsustainable and counterproductive, and that it has severe humanitarian consequences for the civilian population of the Strip; at the same time, we welcome Egypt's decision to partially lift the blockade and Israel's decision to permit access to Gaza for more goods, limiting only material that could affect its security. We recognize the important work in that regard of the Quartet and its Representative and that of representatives of the United Nations system.

While this progress is positive, the lifting of the blockade must be complete. As we have been saying since January 2009, and taking account of Israel's legitimate security concerns, we believe that this security can be achieved only if it is accompanied by

the establishment of an international monitoring mechanism to guarantee a lasting ceasefire, the complete opening of border crossings and control of illicit trafficking in arms to Gaza, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

We also underscore the importance of carrying out the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, which is taking place with the support of Egypt. This is essential for the building of a future Palestinian State.

Frank and direct dialogue is the only way to achieve a comprehensive, lasting resolution of the Middle East conflict that recognizes Israel's right to exist and makes possible the establishment of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, living in peace with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, the Road Map, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We therefore support the holding of so-called proximity talks, so long as they lead to the resumption of direct negotiations within a reasonable time. We must understand that the window of opportunity that opened when the proximity talks began could close if significant progress is not made. We therefore encourage both parties to make every possible effort aimed at an agreed resumption of direct negotiations. Thus, it is essential for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to comply with the principles set out in the Road Map, which are the basis for resolving all pending issues in this conflict.

Similarly, both parties must avoid actions that run counter to international law and international humanitarian law, as well as any provocative statement or act of violence that could exacerbate tension. In that regard, the demolitions in East Jerusalem and the building of new settlements are to be condemned. Such practices in an occupied territory run counter to international law and violate the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We reaffirm that all such practices, including the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem by so-called natural growth, are a further serious obstacle to the peace process. We urge Israel to cease such practices.

We commend the Palestinian Authority's efforts to meet its commitments with respect to security and economic development in the West Bank. We have taken note of the positive economic and human impact of Israel's initiative to partially lift restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank. We hope that these steps will be permanent and will lead to the complete and irreversible dismantling of all checkpoints, which is indispensable for the establishment of a viable and independent Palestinian State.

We are convinced that improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and effective security controls in the West Bank are essential for the achievement of lasting peace in the Middle East. We therefore support Prime Minister Fayyad's plan to lay the economic and institutional foundations of a future Palestinian State; we call upon the Quartet and the international community to continue their active support for those efforts.

Peace in the Middle East requires progress on the various tracks of the conflict in the region. Thus, we are concerned at continued violations of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), in particular daily raids by the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon's territorial space and the discovery of weapons and explosives in the area of operation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We are concerned also by recent acts of violence — presumably organized — against UNIFIL personnel. We must guarantee their safety and freedom of movement in their area of operation and must ensure coordination at the highest level between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Government and UNIFIL in order to avoid incidents like those that took place on 3 July. We appeal to both Israel and Lebanon, and to all other actors involved, to comply with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions and to avoid all hostile rhetoric that could lead to an escalation of violence. It is essential to strengthen Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

Finally, we consider that Israel and Syria must resume a process of rapprochement as soon as possible, through modalities acceptable to both parties, in order to find a solution on the occupied Golan that will preserve the sovereignty and protect the interests of both States.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I welcome the holding of this open debate on the situation in the Middle East. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing and Ambassadors Gabriela Shalev and Riyad Mansour for their remarks.

As we meet for another quarterly open debate on the Middle East, my delegation can see some improvement in the situation on the ground — but, unfortunately, much less than we all wished for. It is disappointing to be forced to recognize that the region remains tense and that a solution continues to prove elusive.

Making substantial progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is perhaps the single most important pending business in the Security Council today, a conflict whose resolution would surely have a positive effect in many areas. In the long term, the status quo is in the interest of no one. Rather, it feeds extremism, fosters disillusionment and discredits diplomacy.

We therefore reiterate our support for the mediation efforts by the United States Administration through the proximity talks and hope that these can lead to direct negotiations. But we should have no illusions: if no real progress is made in the coming weeks, the situation on the ground is not likely to improve in a sustainable manner. On the contrary, the fragile support obtained, on both sides, for engaging in indirect negotiations may be gravely eroded. This process is approaching a point where it must yield results.

When direct talks resume, the international community will have to sustain its involvement throughout the process, as history shows that progress requires strong external incentives. In this context, Brazil reiterates its support for the holding of a comprehensive international conference on the Middle East, once conditions are appropriate. Further engagement by relevant players from outside the region might prove beneficial.

An independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security within internationally recognized borders, remains the only solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and for the long-term stability of the entire region and the world.

On 1 June 2010, the Security Council called for a "prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards" (S/PRST/2010/9) into the Israeli action against a Gaza-bound humanitarian flotilla.

We took due note of the Israel's decision to establish an inquiry panel, with two respectable foreigners as observers. That is a positive step. However, the panel does not meet the requirements set forth by the Security Council. In our view, the gravity of the incident and the facts that the attack has taken place in international waters and that it involves entities and individuals from various countries require that the investigation be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. We therefore urge the Secretary-General to continue consultations on an arrangement that fulfils the requirements by the Council.

The tragic loss of life and injuries to civilians as a result of that action showed once again that the blockade of Gaza is politically unsustainable. That was clearly recognized by the Security Council in the presidential statement of last June. We therefore welcome the Israeli decision to expand the list of goods allowed to be brought into Gaza, including building materials for projects sponsored by the international community. That is particularly welcome, as it will speed up the long-overdue reconstruction of the Strip.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform the Council that yesterday President Lula signed into law a bill by which Brazil will donate 25 million reais — around $15 million — to the Palestine Authority, in principle through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for projects to support Gaza's reconstruction and development.

Also positive is Israel's decision to improve the capacity at the Kerem Shalom crossing and to extend its hours of operation.

However, those measures are still insufficient. Israel must find ways to reconcile legitimate security concerns with the normalization of life in the Strip. An immediate and sustained opening of crossings is imperative. The resumption of regular exports from Gaza is urgently needed as a way to revive an economy that has been crippled by the blockade. The population of Gaza must not be forced to keep surviving on international charity.

A lasting solution to the crisis in Gaza can create a new logic of peace that might not only strengthen those forces in Palestine that favour moderation and national reconciliation, but also pave the way for a strong revival of the peace process altogether. The continuation of the blockade, on the other hand, might aggravate the Palestinian schism and impair a future viable Palestinian state.

Israeli policies that prejudge the result of negotiations and forcefully change the demographics of the West Bank and East Jerusalem make it more difficult for negotiations to be resumed. We reiterate the need for a permanent cessation of all settlement activity. On their part, Palestinians must overcome their longstanding divisions, keep extremists in check, including in Gaza, completely halt the launching of rockets against Israel and enhance democratic governance. In this context, we welcome and support the efforts of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to implement his two-year statehood programme.

We must continue to avoid the return of the conflict between Lebanon and Israel. All parties must therefore faithfully implement their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). We also urge the international community to assist Lebanon in building up its state capacity, in particular its armed forces, and facilitating the central Government to exercise its authority throughout the country.

Mr. Onanga Ndiaye (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for the clear briefing he has just given us. I would also like to join Council members who have spoken before me in expressing my thanks for the information provided by the ambassadors of Palestine and Israel.

My delegation would like to reiterate our concern at the lack of progress made since our most recent debate on this issue (6340th meeting). It quite rightly shows how urgently we need to close the gap between Palestinians and Israelis, as we approach the end of the freeze on new Israeli settlements.

My delegation would like to welcome the international community's inspired new dynamic, in particular the recent initiatives of the United States, Egypt, Morocco, the Quartet and the United Nations, aimed at promoting the resumption of direct talks between the parties in accordance with their obligations and the provisions of the Road Map.

I therefore welcome the regional meeting for Africa organized by the United Nations on 1 and 2 July 2010 in Rabat on strengthening African support for a just and lasting solution to the question of Jerusalem. It was reaffirmed at the end of the meeting that the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies in an agreement negotiated between the parties and that only a two-State solution, with an independent and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, can bring peace to the region.

As recalled by the Secretary-General, the situation in the Middle East will remain tense if we do not arrive at a comprehensive settlement that takes all aspects of the problem into account. My delegation believes that it is important to find solutions to Israel's security concerns as well as to the question of West Bank settlements, border demarcation between the two States in accordance with resolution 242 (1967) and the Fourth Geneva Convention, the status of Jerusalem and respect for human rights and for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

A political solution in the Middle East will also be found by resolving the security situation, as advocated by the Quartet in its statement of 21 June. However, security must be a reality for both sides. Thus, while for the Government of Israel security is synonymous with the end of arms smuggling, for the Palestinian Authority it means respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Moreover, Gabon welcomes the recent efforts by the Israeli Government aimed at adjusting its policy towards Gaza, in particular by allowing the entry of additional goods such as building materials, thus enabling the United Nations and the international community to continue to provide aid to the people of Gaza.

We also welcome the review now underway of the plan for the administration of Judea and Samaria, in particular measures aimed at employment and the free circulation of goods and persons. However, we favour a complete lifting of restrictions, including at the border crossings. We also call for the freeing by the parties of all political prisoners, including Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

With regard to East Jerusalem, my delegation expresses its regret at the destruction of Palestinian families' property on 13 July in certain districts. We deplore this unilateral and provocative act, which is a violation of international law and undermines efforts aimed at resuming negotiations and strengthening mutual confidence.

Moreover, we remain fully committed to finding a solution through peaceful and constructive negotiations that will integrate the legal, religious,

social and environmental aspects of East Jerusalem. We believe that the negotiations should be guided by the borders indicated in the resolutions of 1967 and by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Several members of the Council have often rightly held that, while we must not neglect the symptoms of the disease, we should focus on its root causes of the disease itself. My country thus remains convinced that it is urgent to intensify negotiations in order not only to make direct contact possible but also to reach a lasting peace, which, let me recall, involves creating a viable Palestinian State. We therefore urge the parties to show restraint and avoid any unilateral action and any provocation. We again invite international partners to promote a climate of trust between the parties and throughout the region.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing this morning, and I thank the Palestinian and Israeli representatives for their remarks.

Peace in the Middle East is a high priority for the United Kingdom. With every month that a sustainable solution eludes us, the situation in Israel and Palestine becomes more of a catalyst for resentment, violence and extremism. So it is in the interests of this Council, with its responsibility for international peace and security, and of the rest of the international community, to encourage direct negotiations between the parties, leading to a lasting peace.

The expiry of the Israeli settlement moratorium, and Arab League support for proximity talks in September, highlight the urgent need for progress towards a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The only long-term solution is a secure and universally recognized Israel living alongside a sovereign and viable Palestinian State, with Jerusalem the capital of both States, and a fair settlement for refugees.

We continue to strongly support the United States efforts on proximity talks. It is imperative that the negotiations focus on resolving the final status issues. We encourage the parties to move to direct negotiations as soon as possible. Both sides must avoid actions that undermine the peace process. For Israel, this means extending the settlement moratorium indefinitely and ensuring that it also applies in occupied East Jerusalem. The recent issuing of permits for the construction of 32 new housing units in Pisgat Ze'ev and the demolition of three East Jerusalem homes are exactly the kind of provocative acts that must be avoided. We continue to call for a complete cessation of all settlement activity in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Settlements are illegal under international law and must stop.

For their part, the Palestinians and the Arab States must not back away from their responsibility to seize the opportunity presented by the efforts of the United States Government. The Palestinian leadership must be prepared to make bold decisions in the interests of its people, and it must have the support it needs from Arab States to see negotiations through to a sustainable conclusion. There must be a complete halt to rocket attacks into southern Israel, and Hamas and other militant groups should renounce violence once and for all. As Mr. Pascoe has said, Hamas attacks on United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) children's summer camps in Gaza are particularly deplorable.

Turning to the Gaza flotilla incident of 31 May, I reiterate our deep regret at the loss of life involved. Accountability is important. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General towards that goal. The Israeli independent public commission should proceed swiftly, transparently and rigorously, with access to all the evidence available. We will be better able to draw further conclusions once the conduct of the inquiry becomes clearer.

This incident and the threat of further flotillas highlight what we all know: that the situation in Gaza is unsustainable. Together with the European Union and the Quartet, we have called on Israel to ease restrictions on access and enable a return to economic normality. Israel's recent decision to move from a list of 120 permitted goods to a list of specific prohibited items is a welcome development. It shows that it is possible to lift the pressure on ordinary Gazans without compromising the security of ordinary Israelis. But we need to see this translated into real change on the ground. That will mean building capacity at the crossings, getting vital reconstruction projects up and running and ensuring that Gazans can export as well as import goods. The United Kingdom stands ready to support this.

We continue to call for the immediate release of Gilad Shalit, who has been held hostage in Gaza since June 2006. It is unacceptable that four years on he

should still be held by Hamas, in denial of the most basic of human rights.

A solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is in all our interests. We want the new generation of Palestinians to grow up in hope, not despair, believing in a peaceful settlement with Israel, and not impoverished and susceptible to terrorist recruitment. We want the next generation of Israelis to live free from the fear of rocket fire, and to be able to enjoy peaceful relations with their Arab neighbours. The international community has a responsibility to help deliver that goal.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me first join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his update this morning on recent developments in the Middle East. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine for their presence here today and their contributions to our debate.

Austria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union delegation on behalf of the European Union later in our debate today.

We are close to the end of the ten-month partial moratorium on settlements that the Israeli Government committed to. The four-month deadline for the proximity talks, after which the Arab League wished to evaluate results, is also rapidly approaching. The coming weeks will therefore be crucial for achieving progress in the peace efforts for the Middle East. These efforts must lay the foundation for a sustainable negotiating process; otherwise they will add to the long list of missed opportunities and play into the hands of peace opponents. Quartet members are fully committed to helping the parties get back to the negotiating table. We appreciate the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the United States Special Envoy, Senator Mitchell, to identify common ground for starting a process towards the implementation of a two-State solution.

Austria calls on both parties to honour the obligations they agreed to under the Road Map, and to refrain from any policies that may undermine the spirit of negotiation in good faith. Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the demolition of houses and the continued building of the separation barrier on Palestinian land continue to constitute major obstacles to peace. In this context, we, like others, wish to express our grave concern about the recent demolition of homes in various neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, as well as about decisions on renewed, continued settlement construction.

Trust in a peace process will depend on visible and tangible changes on the ground. Austria has consistently acknowledged Israel's right to protect its citizens against indiscriminate attacks emanating from Gaza. We repeat our call for an immediate end to all such attacks. At the same time, we continue to believe that security concerns cannot justify the blockade of Gaza. That blockade is unacceptable, unsustainable and counterproductive. We therefore welcome Israel's willingness to review its policies regarding imports to the Gaza Strip. We are convinced that the prospect of reconstruction, new job opportunities and increased freedom of movement can contribute to a positive shift of attitudes, and reverse the current worrying trend of de-development, as asserted by United Nations experts.

We welcome Israel's decision to allow, as a first step, imports of building materials for United Nations-supervised projects. These measures go in the right direction. At the same time, they still fall short of the fundamental change of policy leading to a durable resolution to the situation in Gaza that European Union Foreign Ministers called for in their latest European Union Council conclusions.

We strongly encourage Israel to allow for large-scale reconstruction, to create conditions for a full resumption of productive activities, to allow for exports of agricultural produce and industrial goods as soon as production can recommence and, most important, to grant freedom of movement to the civilian population living in then Gaza Strip.

Austria is deeply disturbed by recent attacks against non-governmental organizations and international organizations in Gaza, including, as others have already mentioned, the vandalizing of a summer games facility for children of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Hamas, as the de facto authority in Gaza, bears the responsibility to ensure the safety and unhindered operations of the United Nations and civil society.

Regarding the follow-up to the Security Council's presidential statement of 1 June concerning the military operations against the Gaza flotilla (S/PRST/2010/9), we wish to reiterate the importance of a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards, so as to clarify

all facts. We therefore support the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and call on Israel to positively react to his proposal for an international inquiry.

Austria welcomes the continuing trend of increased stability and economic growth in the West Bank, in particular as it seems that this is due not only to foreign aid but also to improved overall security and a number of successful reform efforts by the Palestinian Authority. Nonetheless, last month's decision to postpone municipal elections was a painful setback in the Palestinian Authority's efforts to build the institutions of a future State. We call on Palestinian political representatives to seriously pursue reconciliation efforts and to agree on a political platform based on the Quartet principles and the quest for peace, democracy and the rule of law. The current split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip jeopardizes prospects for the successful implementation of a two-State solution.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): I should like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his comprehensive briefing. We fully appreciate and support the efforts of the Secretary-General and United Nations officials on the ground.

We are currently at the halfway point in terms of the anticipated duration of the proximity talks before proceeding into the envisaged direct negotiations. We fully support this process and the efforts of the United States. Nevertheless, we have hardly seen any breakthroughs, as the Israeli side has not given up its current approach. During recent weeks, Israel has continued active settlement construction and announced comprehensive future projects in the occupied territories. The evidence suggests that Israeli settlement expansion has actually increased since Israel declared its moratorium on building.

Israel has also continued to implement its policies on Palestinian home demolitions and evictions. Last week, the Israelis destroyed at least six Palestinian buildings in East Jerusalem. The Israeli Jerusalem municipality is also preparing for the demolition of up to 100,000 units in East Jerusalem, starting next month. Israel has not stopped its policy of stripping the residency rights of Palestinians living in Jerusalem either. Among the victims were four elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

These policies are not at all compatible with the understanding of permanent peace, nor do they make any contribution to building confidence between the parties: they simply obstruct the peace process. By now, it should have been realized that Israel has nothing to gain through pursuing such policies. Undermining peace efforts and trying to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations only harm its interests, its standing in the international community and its prospects for the future. In particular, Israel's policies aimed at changing the status and fabric of Jerusalem are deplorable and have far-reaching ramifications.

Israel has made some improvements in terms of the goods and material allowed to enter Gaza. However, this has not changed the fact that the blockade imposed on Gaza is still in place. The blockade continues. So does the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, as they are not allowed to engage in normal economic activity, exporting their products, importing necessary materials and moving freely. Eighty per cent of the Palestinians living in Gaza continue to rely on the support of international aid organizations. Sixty-five per cent of the population is living below the poverty line, with an unemployment rate of 34 per cent.

We welcome the increasing international awareness and sensitivity regarding the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza. The blockade imposed on Gaza is a means of collective punishment. It is unacceptable and immoral, and it poisons the region. The ordeal of the Palestinians in Gaza will end only when the blockade is completely lifted, as stipulated by resolution 1860 (2009).

On 31 May 2010, Israeli military forces attacked a civilian humanitarian convoy in international waters, killing nine civilians. In accordance with the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9), which called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards, the Secretary-General officially proposed an international panel of investigation. We accepted the proposal of the Secretary-General, and we continue to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to establish a panel of investigation. We hope that he will succeed in establishing an independent and impartial panel of inquiry shortly, as he anticipates.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Pascoe, for his briefing. I also thank the Permanent

Representative of the State of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine for their statements.

I should like to address four points, starting with the issue of Gaza, which has been front-page news due to the flotilla episode. France condemned the disproportionate use of force. We would like to see the full implementation of the presidential statement of 1 June 2010 (S/PRST/2010/9), in which the Security Council called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards. We hope that the efforts of the parties concerned, especially Turkey, the State of Israel and the Secretary-General, will make it possible for this objective to be met.

Furthermore, the flotilla episode brought to the fore what we have been saying for some time in this forum: the blockade of the Gaza Strip is not only unacceptable, but also counterproductive. We welcome the decision of the Governments responsible for this policy to reconsider it. In particular, the announcement by the Government of Israel of measures easing the restrictions is welcome, and we hope that it will be fully implemented. We believe that it would be timely to go even further, with the aim of improving the lives of the civilian population and making economic recovery possible in Gaza. I am thinking specifically of such steps as increasing the capacity of crossings, resuming exports and liberalizing the conditions governing the movement of persons to and from the Gaza Strip.

The European Union is following the situation very closely, as shown by the visit at the beginning of this week by High Representative Ashton. The ministers for foreign affairs of the European Union also expressed their willingness for the Union to contribute to a mechanism allowing for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009).

I also note the need for the immediate cessation of all violence, in particular rocket attacks on southern Israel. We further call for the unconditional and immediate liberation of Gilad Shalit, an issue that is being followed very closely in my country.

The flotilla incident also demonstrated the need to reintegrate the territory of Gaza into the peace process. To that end, one of our highest priorities should be to encourage the current mediation efforts in favour of inter-Palestinian reconciliation.

My second point is that we must not lose sight of the fact that the main objective remains the immediate relaunching of the peace process. There is no alternative to the resumption of negotiations towards the creation of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State living in peace side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders on the basis of Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. That is also the position of the European Union, as will be indicated by the acting head of its delegation in his statement, with which France associates itself.

The international community must commit itself to assisting negotiations and to guaranteeing the parameters of a final agreement that would enable the parties to re-engage in dialogue. We are working very closely with United States and Egyptian authorities to define the terms of an international framework that would allow the negotiations to resume.

My third point is that changes are necessary on the ground to create conditions favourable to the resumption of negotiations. The situation in Jerusalem remains concerning. We therefore deplore the recent demolition of homes in Arab neighbourhoods of the city. Like the destruction of Palestinian houses, settlement activities in East Jerusalem are unacceptable and provocative. There can be no peace that excludes Jerusalem, which, as the President of the French Republic said in his address to the Knesset on 23 June 2008, is likely to become the capital of two States.

Settlements throughout the Palestinian territories remain a major obstacle to a solution. The decision of the Government of Israel to announce a 10-month moratorium on new construction and building permits in the West Bank was a step in the right direction that should be fully implemented. No peace will be possible without the complete cessation of the illegal construction of settlements. As noted by the President of France, settlements complicate the establishment of a Palestinian State and thus do not contribute to Israel's security; on the contrary, they increase the dangers.

The implementation by the Israeli authorities of confidence-building measures on the ground would be likely to promote the rapid resumption of the direct talks that we all hope to see. For instance, prisoners could be released, Zones A and B could be extended, and restrictions on access and movement in the West Bank could continue to be lifted. The Palestinian Authority, for its part, must pursue its efforts to

strengthen the security sector and establish the rule of law. The merciless struggle against terrorism must remain a priority.

My fourth and last point is that the international community must provide strong support for the Palestinian Authority and President Abbas in consolidating the institutions of the future Palestinian State. The challenge is also for Israel to assist more resolutely in that process, particularly in the West Bank. Gestures have been made on the ground, but they are insufficient. The Palestinians must be able to see that developments on the ground will lead to the end of the occupation, in particular in terms of freedom of access and movement.

In this regard, we reiterate our support for Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad's plan, pursuant to the Paris Conference of December 2007, to create a Palestinian State within a fixed period of time. In order to maintain the momentum of international support created by the Conference, on 1 July French Minister for Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner held another follow-up meeting with the co-Presidents in the presence of Prime Minister Fayyad and Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

I reiterate that our prime objective is the urgent resumption of negotiations, not only on issues of concern to Israelis and Palestinians, but also other, regional aspects of the peace process. Accordingly, we are working to establish conditions for the resumption of talks between Israel and Syria. We are also pursuing our efforts in Lebanon and call on the parties to implement resolution 1701 (2006), which would guarantee peace between the two countries. In this context, we reaffirm the crucial role played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The Force must be able to discharge its mandate with the full cooperation of the parties.

The international community and this Council have a major role to play because the situation in the Middle East concerns all of us. France is ready to play its full part in that effort. To that end, the President of France has called for a peace summit, organized in cooperation with all concerned actors, to support United States efforts and assist in the resumption of talks between the two parties.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): I thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank the observer of Palestine and the representative of Israel for their statements.

It is a matter of concern to my delegation that the situation in the Middle East remains fragile and tense. It is regrettable that, despite the international and regional efforts to relaunch direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine, no tangible progress has been achieved. We commend, however, the efforts of the United States Administration and the Quartet.

We encourage Israel and Palestine to take practical steps to start direct negotiations. It is in doing so that a comprehensive and lasting peace, based on the vision of two democratic States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security, can be realized. Ultimately, lasting peace in the Middle East will be achieved through the efforts and agreement of both parties.

We commend the continued efforts of the Palestinians to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map, particularly in the security sector, State-building and economic development. We are concerned, however, about divisions among the Palestinian groups, and call on the Palestinians to overcome their differences and forge unity.

Israel's continued settlement activity in East Jerusalem is a matter of serious concern. We call on Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth. We are further concerned about recent incidents in which additional home demolition orders have been issued in East Jerusalem.

On Gaza, we are concerned about the grave humanitarian situation caused by the blockade. We welcome the recent efforts of Israel to ease the blockade, which have facilitated the onset of a number of United Nations projects and allowed more goods into Gaza. However, this is not enough. We call on Israel to fully open the borders and lift the blockade.

Concerning the flotilla incident, we support an impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards, as called for by the Council's presidential statement of 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9).

In January 2009, this Council expressed its concern at the ceasefire violations and the deterioration of the situation in Gaza. We are concerned that the violations persist today. We reiterate our call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further

escalation. We call for the complete implementation of resolution 1860 (2009).

The attacks on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) summer camps in Gaza last month, which set fire to their recreation facilities, were deplorable. We are glad to hear that UNRWA will rebuild the camps to continue with its summer programmes, which are important for the physical and psychological well-being of Gaza's citizens.

On Lebanon, we salute the national unity Government for its efforts in broadening a national consensus that has translated into internal stability. The continued violations of resolution 1701 (2006), such as violations of Lebanese airspace, ground violations of the Blue Line and the lack of enforcement of the arms embargo, are matters of serious concern. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon should be respected, and we call on all parties to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006).

Mr. Li Baodong (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe for his briefing. I also listened attentively to the statements of the observer of Palestine and the representative of Israel.

The current situation in the Middle East remains complex and volatile. The early end to tension and confrontation and the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East are the shared wish of the international community. China maintains, as always, that political negotiations are the only way to solve the Middle East question. We support negotiations between Palestine and Israel so that they can live side by side in peace as two States.

We welcome the launching of proximity talks between Palestine and Israel, and we urge both sides to build up their faith in peaceful negotiations and to solve the issues of security, borders, settlements, refugees and the status of Jerusalem in a comprehensive, just and sustainable manner. At this stage, the international community should make greater effort to push for a new momentum for negotiations so as to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process.

The parties concerned must demonstrate political will, enhance mutual trust, make courageous compromises and avoid any action that could undermine mutual trust, obstruct the negotiations or prejudge the outcome of the negotiations. We oppose Israel's recent approval of the construction of new housing in East Jerusalem and its demolition of Palestinian structures. Not only has this complicated the situation, but it will also hurt the negotiation process. We urge Israel to completely cease all settlement and wall construction in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the Gaza Strip in particular, remains grim. Israel's blockade has inflicted great suffering on more than 1 million residents of Gaza, whose rights to life and development have been gravely violated. This state of affairs is unacceptable and must not be sustained. We call on the international community to continue to follow these developments closely and to provide greater assistance to the people of Gaza.

We welcome the fact that Israel has recently eased its restrictions on the flow of some humanitarian aid and commercial goods to Gaza, and we call on Israel to put a complete end to its blockade of Gaza and let the people of Gaza resume their normal, dignified existence and livelihood and regain their space for development.

The Israeli attack of 31 May against a flotilla transporting humanitarian aid to Gaza was unfortunate. Such incidents must not recur. We support fair, impartial, credible and transparent investigations conforming to the spirit of the United Nations Charter and based on the principles established in the presidential statement of 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9).

As always, China supports Palestine in its just cause of establishing an independent State. We hope that all Palestinian parties will work in their long-term national interest and stay united in their efforts to establish an independent State of Palestine and ensure a bright future of peace and steady development. China supports the early establishment of an independent State of Palestine through the two-State solution on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, the principle of land for peace and the Road Map, so that Palestine and Israel can live side by side in peace as two States. We will continue to make greater efforts to this end alongside the international community.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Nigeria.

I, too, would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe for his very detailed briefing on the current situation in the Middle East. It is clear that, in the weeks following the tragic events of 31 May, important lessons have been learned by all parties. While the incident and its consequences are most regrettable, we welcome the decision of the Israeli authorities to ease the restrictions on goods entering the Gaza Strip by land. Commendable as this step is, we believe that a complete and unconditional lifting of the ban is imperative to bringing an end to the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the Gaza blockade. The blockade is indeed a collective punishment meted out on innocent people in Gaza, and we hope Israel will live up to its obligations under international humanitarian law.

We commend the positive role played by the Egyptian authorities in averting yet another confrontation by allowing an aid vessel to unload its cargo at Al-Arish, from where the goods were transported in trucks to the Rafa crossing into Gaza. We encourage such prudence and circumspection by all sides in handling similar situations in the future to avert the use of force.

We note Israel's decision to commission a panel of inquiry led by retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice Jacob Turkel to investigate the flotilla incident. It will be necessary for the panel in its work to meet international standards of independence and transparency, as envisaged in the presidential statement of 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9). The findings of the panel should aim to command credibility and legitimacy. Indeed, there is scope for Israel to consider the well-meaning offer of the Secretary-General to facilitate an impartial and independent investigation of the flotilla incident.

While the past few months have been testing times in the region, the next few months may prove even more trying. The demolition of Palestinian homes last week and the approval of the new settlement in East Jerusalem will no doubt inflame passion and reaction. Therefore we renew our call on Israel to refrain from deliberate acts of provocation. In the same vein, we urge the Palestinians to exercise restraint and also guard against inflammatory rhetoric as well as acts of violence. Mutual confidence is what the two sides need in order to proceed to direct talks, building on the gains of recent rounds of proximity talks. Time is fast running out, and faith in the hope of attaining a two-State solution within 24 months, as envisaged by the Middle East Quartet statement of 19 March 2010 in Moscow, is gradually eroding.

In order to recapture the momentum, we call on all interlocutors, including the Arab League, not to waver in their determination to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. In this respect, we welcome the efforts of the Middle East Envoy, Senator George Mitchell, to hold further talks between Israel and the Palestinians. We also welcome the visit of Catherine Ashton to the region, undertaken in an effort to ease the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

The continued detention of Gilad Shalit without access to visitors does not serve any useful purpose for the peace process. On the contrary, it fuels mistrust and heightens animosity. His unconditional release would create a new atmosphere conducive to peace. Indeed, a prisoner exchange between the Israeli and Palestinian authorities would go a long way towards easing tensions and building much-needed confidence.

Now more than ever, the parties to this dispute need to demonstrate their undivided commitment to peace. They must remove all obstacles to the resumption of direct negotiations to resolve the outstanding permanent status issues.

The Council, for its part, should continue its supportive role in the peace process, fostering security and stability within the occupied Palestinian territory.

For our part, we shall remain firmly committed to the goal of seeing a secure State of Israel living side by side in peace, harmony and security with an independent State of Palestine with recognized borders. While peace in the Middle East is attainable, it must be underpinned by sustained political will and commitment. The Middle East needs peace, and so does the rest of the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt): I have the pleasure to address the Security Council today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, including the Arab Group, which Egypt has the honour to chair this month.

I would like to start by expressing appreciation for the convening of this debate to address the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. It takes place at a time when endeavours continue to be made to support and advance the resumption of peace process negotiations and to overcome the lack of progress and, in some respects, the deteriorating situation and rising tensions resulting from the ongoing Israeli occupation and the many violations that continue to be perpetrated by the occupying Power. These include its illegal settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular East Jerusalem, and its continuing imposition of a blockade on Gaza.

Despite all serious efforts to relaunch direct negotiations towards the attainment of the well-known and internationally-supported objectives of the peace process, a just and lasting settlement to the question of Palestine regrettably remains far from being achieved, as Israel, the occupying Power, continues to carry out illegal policies and practices that are totally contradictory to an outcome based on a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders.

In the light of the ongoing situation, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call for the international community to be resolute in demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, abide by its legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, respect the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and comply with its Road Map obligations.

Israel must cease all of its violations and unlawful measures, including its policies of collective punishment and colonization in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This is essential to creating an environment conducive to the launching of direct negotiations on all core issues, which must be conducted within a fixed time frame and in good faith, in accordance with the agreed principles and terms of reference of the peace process, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of reference including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map.

While the Palestinian Authority has repeatedly affirmed its determination, with Arab support, to pursue the path of peace, security and State-building, Israel continues to fail to abide by its obligations and continues to blatantly impede efforts to resume direct negotiations, through a series of measures that only further aggravate the situation. These include the 31 May military attack on the civilian maritime convoy carrying humanitarian assistance to Gaza to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's blockade.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its condemnation of Israel's use of force against the civilian maritime convoy and calls upon the Secretary-General to initiate a full, impartial, transparent, independent and credible investigation, as demanded by the Security Council. Further, the Movement fully supports the demand of the Human Rights Council, through its resolution 14/1, for an accountable and fully independent investigation into the matter.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that justice must prevail and that the unacceptable and unsustainable situation in the Gaza Strip must end. The unresolved crisis of Gaza continues to have negative repercussions on efforts to advance peace and inflicts deep suffering on the Palestinian civilian population there. We reiterate, in this regard, that international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the relevant United Nations resolutions, must be fully applied and respected by Israel, the occupying Power. The Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel immediately lift its blockade, in compliance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 and other relevant United Nations resolutions in this regard.

We still believe that the international community must play its rightful and obligatory role by taking the necessary action to halt all illegal measures taken by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses deep concern regarding the extensive damage caused by Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the separation wall and the network of hundreds of checkpoints that the occupying Power continues to impose, which are undermining the contiguity, integrity, viability and unity of the Palestinian territory, isolating East Jerusalem and seriously jeopardizing the prospects for physically achieving the two-State solution.

The international community, represented by the United Nations, must take clear action to ensure that violations are swiftly brought to an end and replaced by concerted endeavours for peace, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions and the Charter.

Turning now to Lebanon, the Non-Aligned Movement remains deeply concerned over Israel's ongoing violations of Lebanon's sovereignty, in breach of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The Movement calls for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) by all parties in order to end the current fragility and to avoid the recurrence of violence.

Concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that all measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the legal, physical or demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as Israeli measures to impose jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no legal effect. The Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel abide by resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967, in implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I do not need to state that if the ongoing Israeli measures are not stopped and remedied, their consequences will lead to the further destabilization of the situation in the region, with far-reaching repercussions. Tangible progress in the peace process is vital and would contribute to a positive dynamic. This requires Israel to cease immediately and completely its illegal policies and measures in Gaza and the West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem, and that it finally commit to the terms of reference of the peace process and uphold its legal obligations and commitments in this regard. The international community has to take the lead by reaffirming clear parameters for the negotiating process on all core issues and by helping the parties to reach agreed solutions based on United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and agreements reached between the parties.

To conclude, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call for serious and concrete actions from the Security Council, stressing in this regard the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved justly and satisfactorily in all respects. This is a responsibility from which the Security Council cannot be absolved, particularly in the light of its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, which cannot be achieved as long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole continue to fester unresolved, with their wide-ranging impact on the region and beyond.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paul Badji, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. Badji (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on the exemplary and effective manner in which you are steering the work of the Council this month. I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico, for his effective guidance of the Council during the month of June.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his thorough and objective briefing on the situation in the Middle East and the status of the question of Palestine. It clearly showed that the parties and the international community must engage forcefully at this critical juncture to create conditions conducive to the resumption of serious negotiations on all permanent status issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While we all would wholeheartedly welcome serious direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, our Committee is of the view that such negotiations can be successful only in an atmosphere of mutual trust and if the parties are convinced that they will lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting outcome. To that end, the parties must first and foremost implement their respective obligations as established in the Road Map and endorsed by the Council.

Our Committee remains alarmed by the refusal of the Israeli Government to heed the calls of the international community for a complete halt of settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. In spite of the limited moratorium, the pace of construction in certain settlements has not even slowed, as reported by the *New York Times* last week. The Committee calls on

Israel to enforce the moratorium and to extend it indefinitely. The moratorium should also be applied to East Jerusalem. That would certainly be the most important step the Israeli Government could take to contribute to a resumption of direct negotiations between the parties.

The situation in East Jerusalem remains of utmost concern to our Committee. Settlement expansion continues and the city's planning and construction committee approved new housing units in East Jerusalem just last week. House demolitions have resumed, residency rights are being revoked and Palestinian politicians in the city are threatened with deportation. This state of affairs is unacceptable and calls for a swift reaction by the international community. The Committee would like to reiterate its position that Israel's dangerous policies in East Jerusalem risk inciting forceful reactions by large parts of the Muslim world that could lead to violence and even armed conflict. It is the prerogative and obligation of the Security Council to intervene swiftly and resolutely to prevent a possible escalation of violence.

It will be six years this month that the International Court of Justice rendered the historic advisory opinion determining that the construction by Israel of the separation barrier within the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, constitutes numerous violations of international law. The International Court of Justice concluded that such violations engaged Israel's responsibility to cease construction, dismantle the existing sections in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and provide reparations, including restitution of confiscated property and compensation for damages incurred.

However, construction of the wall has continued at the same pace, cutting thousands of Palestinians off from their lands, families, schools and hospitals. Our Committee is disturbed by the impunity with which these legal obligations have long been flouted by Israel, and calls on the Security Council to take the required action to ensure respect for and compliance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The deadly raid carried out by the Israeli Defense Forces on 31 May against the unarmed Gaza freedom flotilla was more than a human tragedy. That incident and the ease with which Israel has avoided an impartial investigation into its actions clearly demonstrate that politics often trump accountability to the law.

While our Committee acknowledges the value of internal investigations at the national level, it fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendation for an international investigation under United Nations auspices. Only after a truly impartial accounting of the events of 31 May will all parties be satisfied that those responsible for violations of international law will be held to account.

Our Committee also follows closely the repercussions of the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48). We maintain that the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone, presents a comprehensive, balanced and authoritative account of the 2008-2009 Israeli incursion into Gaza. While our Committee recognizes the value of the Israeli Government's recent examination of some specific allegations in the Goldstone report, it also calls for a comprehensive investigation into the actions of the parties and demands follow-up action. The Committee advocates the creation by the Security Council of an independent committee of experts to monitor the ongoing investigations on both sides.

Since the Council's last open debate under this agenda item (6298th meeting), our Committee has held two international meetings — one in Istanbul, Turkey, and the other in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco — to support the resumption of the peace process.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People remains committed to achieving the two-State solution, whereby Israel and the future Palestinian State will live side by side in peace and security. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, have a special responsibility in the realization of this vision. I assure the Council of the Committee's cooperation and support in implementing its resolutions on the Palestinian question.

The President: I thank Mr. Badji for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Enge (Norway): With key deadlines and expiration dates fast approaching, September seems set to mark a critical juncture in the search for a negotiated

two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Our shared hope is that serious and substantive negotiations on the permanent-status issues will be under way before that decisive point in time. Direct negotiations may also serve to lock in the modest achievements of the past year and extend and expand them in accordance with key Road Map obligations.

As chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), Norway has repeatedly stressed the need for a clear political horizon in order to justify the high levels of international donor support to the Palestinian State-building project. Earnest negotiations, backed by good-faith efforts to create a favourable environment on the ground, are essential to keep the two-State solution clearly in sight. A credible process for the political track, within the time frame set by the Middle East Quartet, will help to sustain the donor community's commitment to the parallel effort to build a Palestinian State from the bottom up. On the economic track, the plan of the Fayyad Government to prepare for Palestinian statehood within two years remains the platform on which to centre our continued support.

Ultimately, Palestinian statehood cannot be realized without Gaza as an integral part of the future Palestinian State. The West Bank and Gaza must sooner or later be reintegrated as one territorial, political and economic unit. The recent Israeli decision to ease the blockade of Gaza is a welcome step in the right direction. Now the immediate challenge is to ensure prompt and effective implementation of the ensuing measures. We are confident that this can be done without prejudice to legitimate Israeli security concerns.

In line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the AHLC is taking an active part in facilitating those efforts. Through the Joint Liaison Committee — a subcommittee of the AHLC — discussions are under way between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and international partners to work out the modalities for implementation of the package.

The reopening of traffic in and out of Gaza is not just a question of stocking the shelves with legally imported goods, nor is it really an issue of letting in construction materials, however important that is for the reconstruction of Gaza. The overriding objective must be to allow for inbound supplies and outbound exports on a commercial scale that will foster the reversal of the dramatic de-development of Gaza. That requires strengthened capacity and more efficient control procedures at the border crossings.

And let us not forget: it is just as vital to lift the blockade on people. The people of Gaza cannot be fenced in indefinitely. They must be allowed to exercise their right to freedom of movement. At the end of the day, the impoverished people of Gaza should have the opportunity to claim their rightful place in, and make their indispensable contribution to, a future Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6363 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6363rd meeting

Wednesday, 21 July 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Ms. Kaudel
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Marinčić
	Brazil	Mr. Moretti
	China	Mr. Zhang Changwei
	France	Mr. Kassianides
	Gabon	Mrs. Ntyam-Ehya
	Japan	Mr. Arima
	Lebanon	Mr. Khachab
	Mexico	Ms. Posada Otero
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. Dizdar
	Uganda	Mrs. Kafeero
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Scott
	United States of America	Mr. Grant

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I would like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Ecuador and Iceland, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour to address the Security Council at this important meeting under the presidency of friendly Nigeria. I would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe, the Under-Secretary-General, for his important briefing to us this morning.

My delegation thanks you, Madam President, for convening this open debate, which comes at a very critical and dangerous time for the Middle East, when opportunities for peace and stability are receding and opportunities for threats, war and aggression are on the rise. All of this is a result of Israel's feverish race against time in its efforts to erode all that remains of the hopes of resuming the peace process. Israel continues to work for the Judaization of Jerusalem, to build a racist separation wall on occupied Palestinian territory, to intensify settlement activity there, to occupy the Syrian Golan and to blockade Gaza. It has attacked the freedom flotilla ships and murdered the international peace activists they carried, in flagrant defiance of the international community and in violation of international law and the basic values and principles of humanity and civilization.

This meeting is being held in the sixth year since the International Court of Justice adopted its advisory opinion confirming the illegitimacy of the separation wall, and long decades since Israel first occupied Arab territory. That is indeed the crux and the fundamental reason for the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is by its nature a provocative, unjust offence whereby Israel has violated all relevant rules and international resolutions and committed every kind of war crime against the Palestinian people: killing women and children; violating the sanctity of places of worship; inflicting collective punishment; closing border crossings; detaining tens of thousands of civilians and democratically elected Palestinian officials; and pursuing a racist, expansionist occupation accompanied by cancerous, declared and undeclared settlements in the occupied Arab territories, especially Jerusalem, in a manner that targets the very existence of that city and its Islamic and Christian character.

Such settlements have devoured around 42 per cent of the lands of the West Bank, according to reports by the Israeli organization B'Tselem, in clear violation of international law. We should recall that Israel continued to pursue these policies until a few days ago. After the meeting between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israel announced the construction of 32 new settlement units in East Jerusalem.

Syria, along with other Arab countries, has worked, through the adoption of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, to achieve peace and all that peace entails: the restoration of all Arab rights, including Israel's total withdrawal from all occupied territories to the line of 4 June 1967, and the settlement of Palestinian refugees as set forth in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

The Israelis' rejection of this is clear; they disdain all such decisions. Committing crimes against the Palestinian people is not enough; their crimes have extended to peace activists of other nationalities who tried to deliver humanitarian assistance to Gaza on the freedom flotilla. Israel's terrorist aggression killed nine civilians whose only crime was to try to help the people under blockade and whose suffering could not be alleviated by all the resolutions and decisions adopted by the international community.

That was Israel's true response to the proposals for peace in the Middle East, a response that we have

sought to remind the world of throughout the decades since Israel first occupied our lands. Israel defies not only international law, but its own bilateral relations with important countries within and outside the region, in a manner that threatens the region's stability and embarrasses its closest allies.

Around two months ago, this Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/9) in which it called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards; for the immediate release of the convoy ships; and for the delivery of their humanitarian assistance to besieged Gaza. Today more than ever, the Security Council must move beyond the mere condemnation of such acts; it should translate its resolutions into practical steps commensurate with Israel's terrible actions, so that they do not meet the fate of other, previous resolutions on Israel that remain dead letters.

I would like to note here that Mr. John Ging, the Director of Operations in Gaza of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), stated today that all Israeli claims to have reduced the effects of the blockade and allowed the entry of some basic goods into Gaza are totally incorrect. We also recall that the General Assembly has approved the recommendations of the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48), which included conclusive evidence concerning Israel's violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international humanitarian law during its aggression against Gaza. Such violations are tantamount to war crimes and perhaps even to crimes against humanity. Every United Nations body has called for the implementation of the report's recommendations.

Thus, we call today on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility to hold Israel's officials responsible for their acts and to punish them for their crimes in Gaza. We also call on the Council to press for the immediate lifting of the unjust blockade imposed on the Palestinian people in Gaza, to open all crossings, and to begin to reconstruct Gaza, which was destroyed by Israel's aggression.

After 43 years of Israel's unjust occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights — and despite all the resolutions concerning its international illegitimacy, including resolution 497 (1981), and the call by a majority of the countries of the world to put an end to that occupation, as well as their condemnation of Israel's oppressive practices and violation of so many laws and resolutions — Israel still refuses to accept these appeals or to implement any resolutions. On the contrary, after occupying the Syrian Golan, Israel declared its annexation, in clear violation of the principles of international law and its obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Since that occupation, Israel has employed every possible means to attempt to expel the citizens of the area, impose colonizing settlements on them and import foreign settlers, preferring them over the indigenous people of the Golan, whom they have incarcerated in detention.

Recent Israeli military exercises in the Golan Heights have destroyed 5,000 dunums of fertile land. On 12 July, Israeli forces used force to enter the home of a Syrian citizen in the village of Mejdel Shams. When villagers attempted to face them, some 25 persons, including women and children, were hurt as a result of the tear gas munitions used by the Israeli forces, and some were hit by rubber bullets. Mr. Lynn Pascoe referred to this incident today.

My country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, in identical letters dated 4 January 2010 addressed to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General (S/2010/4, annex), referred to Israeli violations in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, where Israel is planning to Judaize and control even more Syrian territory in the Golan, in steps that send a provocative message to Syria and other States that are seeking peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. And, yet, in flagrant defiance of the will of the international community, the Israeli Knesset, just a few days ago, on 9 July, adopted, after a first reading, a resolution stating that any agreement on withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights should be subject to a referendum requiring the support of 80 per cent of Israelis. This decision is in clear defiance of the entire world and a rejection of peace. All that has been said by Israeli Government representatives is just manoeuvring and manipulation: there is no real Israeli partner for peace. The clear reality, as His Excellency President Bashar Al-Assad has said, is that peace has never been an obsession of Israel; Israel's obsession has always been its own security, in the narrowest sense. This can be realized only at our cost in terms of peace and rights.

It is illogical and unacceptable that we, the Arabs, should be required to continue proving our sincere desire for peace, even though we have declared it

repeatedly, especially since the Madrid Conference in 1991. It is for the Israelis to prove that they want peace and to manifest in a pragmatic and realistic way that they are seeking peace and justice. They have to try to convince us, the Arabs, that they want peace. It is they who occupy our land. It is they who attack our people. It is they who displace millions of our people. It is not the other way around. It is they who commit all of these actions, and yet they call for protection and guarantees, resorting to false pretexts to engage in blackmail and gain further concessions.

The representative of Israel referred to the alleged smuggling of arms to the Lebanese resistance. She forgets that Israel has been mentioned hundreds of times in United Nations reports — reports of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and reports by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Lebanon. All of these reports mention, hundreds of times, that it is Israel that violates resolution 1701 (2006) and violates the sovereignty of Lebanon around the clock. She forgets that Israel is the most heavily armed of the parties, with conventional as well as nuclear weapons: Israel is armed to the teeth. Since 1950, certain countries have assured Israel of its military superiority over all its Arab neighbours combined. She is also oblivious to the fact that Israel uses that military arsenal to perpetuate its occupation of our land, to continue committing its acts of aggression and to commit acts of piracy against the activists of the peace flotilla. Indeed, Israel deploys submarines capable of carrying weapons to the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, and issues threats of war every day. It violates international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations all at once on a daily basis. Israel is known to be one of the largest importers of weapons in the world. It is also the world's fourth largest weapons exporter.

The problem with Israel's representative here and its policymakers and decision-makers is that they have not yet understood that occupation is one of the worst crimes of aggression, as defined in General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX). They have not yet grasped that they have exhausted this Organization after hours — years — of meetings on how to bring their occupation of our land to an end.

One solution could be for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to organize a conference or special training session for the representative of Israel and Israeli decision-makers to help them understand the definition of aggression as stipulated in the Charter and in United Nations resolutions. The lecturers should, preferably, be the special rapporteurs on human rights and those who have chaired the many inspection teams and fact-finding missions formed since 1948 to investigate the repeated crimes of Israel. It would do them no harm to recall the spirit of Count Bernadotte and to attend such a training session.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation should like to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this important and timely debate. I also congratulate you on your able stewardship of the Security Council this month. Undoubtedly, today's debate is a welcome opportunity to underscore once again the importance of finding a solution to the situation in the Middle East and, in particular, the question of Palestine.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing this morning.

Today's debate takes place against the backdrop of the tragic events of 31 May 2010, when Israeli forces attacked a humanitarian aid flotilla headed for Gaza, demonstrating Israel's contempt for international law, and therefore deserving condemnation in the strongest possible terms. The Israeli military assault on the aid flotilla clearly has a negative impact on the search for a lasting solution to the challenges confronting the region and results from the continued illegal blockade of the Gaza strip.

In reaction to this incident, we recalled our Ambassador to Israel for consultation and also summoned the Israeli Ambassador to South Africa to register the South African Government's strongest protest at the Israeli Government's attack on the flotilla.

The South African Government therefore calls for the blockade of Gaza to be immediately lifted. This blockade, which has brought untold hardships to the

ordinary people of Gaza, has subjected Palestinians to subhuman conditions and is both unconscionable and unsustainable. South Africa, while noting Israel's recent steps towards a shift in policy on Gaza, unequivocally supports the Secretary-General's call for an end to the blockade so that humanitarian assistance, commercial goods and persons can flow through functioning land crossings. The continuance of this blockade deprives ordinary Palestinians of their rights to cross-border trade and movement, limiting the extent to which they can exercise their social and economic rights and inflicting untold suffering and collective punishment on the citizens of Gaza. The illegal blockade of Gaza further serves to seriously undermine the creation of an economically viable Palestinian State.

My delegation has always stated that a long-term solution to the challenges facing the region can be achieved only through negotiations. For this to happen, it is essential that a climate of mutual trust and peace be created. South Africa notes that the internal committee set up by the Israeli Government to probe the Israeli attack has concluded its investigations. Although it admits that mistakes were made by the Israeli military, no further action was recommended. However, South Africa reiterates its call for any investigation to be prompt, impartial, credible and transparent, in line with the United Nations recommendations, and, as this action had international ramifications, to be conducted by independent international investigators. South Africa therefore strongly supports the proposal of the Secretary-General for an international investigation that would involve an independent panel and include representatives from Israel and Turkey to investigate this incident.

The international community cannot allow such serious violations of international law to go unpunished, which would only serve as a license for further acts of impunity on the part of Israel. In this regard, the Security Council must ensure that Israel upholds its legal obligations under international law. Such actions on the part of Israel, in our view, would build the trust necessary for taking negotiations towards a permanent solution.

My delegation notes with concern that, despite Israel's restraint policy, settlement construction continues in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We therefore reiterate our call on Israel to immediately cease the building and expansion of settlements and the continued demolition of Palestinian houses in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which constitute a violation of international law, relevant Security Council resolutions and Israel's obligations under the Road Map.

My delegation remains convinced that the only viable solution to the challenges confronting the region is a political solution based on the creation of a permanent State of Palestine and Israel coexisting peaceably side by side on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the implementation of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the Quartet Road Map.

In this connection, my delegation is of the view that the proximity talks between the parties should result in credible negotiations with the objective of finding a lasting solution to all permanent status issues. The search for a lasting solution will require demonstrable action on the part of all parties, and Israel in particular as the occupier, in taking the process forward and to achieve a lasting peace and security in the region. Current Israeli action does little to build confidence and has ironically served to further frustrate attempts at achieving meaningful negotiations.

My delegation is deeply concerned over Israel's ongoing violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and calls for the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). My delegation also calls on Israel to implement resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) with regard to the Syrian Golan Heights. Only through a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East that also addresses the Syrian and Lebanese tracks will a durable and just peace in the region be achieved.

In conclusion, South Africa, as a product of the solidarity of the international community, believes that the international community owes it to the Palestinian people to deliver them from the illegal Israeli occupation. The resolution of this issue by and large remains a question of political will. It will warrant difficult decisions to be made and implemented, particularly on the part of the Security Council. And if the Security Council is to meet its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, its members must be prepared to take those difficult decisions and, more important, to implement them. It

can no longer be business as usual when generation after generation of Palestinians are being denied peace, stability, freedom and respect for their human dignity. This body must carry out its Charter obligations on the maintenance of international peace and security and decisively deal with this issue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Shawabkah (Jordan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, Madam President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

Once again, the Council is meeting to take up the conflict in the Middle East and Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories and of Arab territories in the Syrian Golan and South Lebanon. The Council is meeting at a time of intensive United States efforts, with major international support, to create an environment conducive to the relaunching of direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel in order to achieve the two-State solution through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in peace and security with the State of Israel and all other States of the region. We in Jordan support these efforts and call on Israel to respond positively to them by resuming direct negotiations as soon as possible from the point at which the previous negotiations stopped, and to address all final status questions, including Jerusalem, refugees, security and borders.

Such negotiations must be clearly time-bound and subject to strict criteria to monitor the fulfillment of obligations. All parties must evince their seriousness by matching actions with words. Any demonstration of a commitment to peace ipso facto requires a halt to all unilateral Israel actions in the occupied West Bank — the heart of which is East Jerusalem — including forced migration, deportation, the seizure of property and land, and the policy of demolishing the homes of Christian and Muslim Palestinians and evicting them. There also must be an immediate stop to all excavations and tunnels beneath and around the Christian and Islamic holy sites.

Needless to say, such actions, over and above being illegal and illegitimate, violate the norms of international law and international humanitarian law and constitute a flagrant breach by Israel of its obligations as the occupying Power and of scores of resolutions of this Council and hundreds of resolutions of the General Assembly. These actions also hinder the United States and international efforts.

The two-State solution is the only solution to the question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Attainment of such a solution and of comprehensive peace in the Middle East in accordance with established international terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative is of vital interest not only to the nations and peoples of our region but to the entire world. It also commands international unanimity.

Similarly, the Arab Peace Initiative — adopted in 2002 by the Council of the League of Arab States at the Beirut Summit and reaffirmed in all subsequent Arab summits, most recent of which was the Sirte summit, held last March, and also endorsed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) at the summit level and the ministerial level — reflects the depth of the Islamic and Arab commitment to an even-handed, comprehensive, permanent and just peace. Regrettably, that important initiative has not been received with commensurate acceptance or positive reaction by successive Israeli Governments. It is high time for Israel to respond positively to this balanced, committed and significant initiative, which would create a win-win situation for all parties.

That is because Israel's acceptance of the Arab Peace Initiative would guarantee the end of its occupation of all Syrian territories occupied since 1967 and the remaining Lebanese territories occupied in the same year and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and because it would guarantee an agreed resolution of the issue of Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and would secure for Israel peace agreements with all Arab States and normal relations with 35 other Islamic States. Moreover, Israel's acceptance and implementation of the Initiative would put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and guarantee the security of all States and peoples of the region, including Israel. It would integrate Israel into the region, replacing its recourse to a citadel mentality, which does not bring about security, stability, peace, good-neighbourliness or cooperation.

Hence, we affirm and underscore the importance of a holistic solution and of seeking as soon as possible

to resume negotiations on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks from the point at which the previous negotiations stopped, within a frame of reference based on the established peace process terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Allow me on behalf of my country to emphasize the severity and gravity of the scope and implications of the absence of peace and security in the Middle East. When His Hashemite Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein consistently affirms the centrality of the question of Palestine and its priority and precedence over all other questions in the region, he is proceeding from the firm conviction that the two-State solution and the peace process constitute the only approach that will enable us to effectively and efficiently address the region's other challenges and problems, including the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and manifestations of intolerance, extremism, terrorism and violence.

In view of the uninterrupted historic role assumed by His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein and Jordan as custodian of sacred Christian and Islamic holy sites, I would like to acquaint the Council with the gravity of Israeli actions in Al-Quds, which are intended to create new realities on the ground and to eradicate religious monuments, in particular Christian and Islamic sites. This constitutes a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law, which obliges the occupying Power to preserve cultural, historic and religious sites and not to undermine or demolish them. The Council realizes that Israel's continuation of such actions offends the feelings of hundreds of millions of Christians and Muslims, not only in the region but all over the world. Therein lies the real threat to the international peace and security provided for in the United Nations Charter.

The notable economic and security achievements of the Palestinian Government in the Palestinian territories are threatened by Israel's continued policy of isolation, roadblocks, separation walls and closure. Hence, this policy and these practices must be stopped, and the Israeli blockade of Gaza must be ended immediately.

Moreover, until the full and prompt lifting of its blockade in accordance with its legal obligations and in support of lofty humanitarian values, Israel must deal positively with international attempts to extend a helping hand to the Gaza Strip. The recent Israeli aggression against the freedom flotilla is evidence of Israel's discriminatory and widely denounced approach to the values of humanitarian relief, which bring together humankind, regardless of religion, race, culture or civilization. We call for a guarantee that such denounced acts of aggression will not be repeated.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): My thanks go to you, Madam President, for convening this very important meeting. I would like thank Lynn Pascoe for his valuable insights. But unfortunately, what we are looking for — something new to work with — has not been forthcoming.

At the outset I would like to associate myself with the statements made by my friend the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Syria on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The situation in the Middle East is as old as the United Nations. It has been debated in the Security Council for many years, and we have passed countless resolutions and presidential statements calling for a settlement. Even today that settlement eludes us, and unfortunately, the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories under conflict and violence remains.

We are now in the seventh decade of our collective failure to enforce peace in the Middle East. I call for collective action to facilitate a long-term political settlement, which must create a viable Palestinian State. We may prioritize this action into two areas.

First, we must unequivocally call upon Israel to end what most here consider a repressive policy of occupying forces — repressive because those forces have converted the Palestinian land into a maze, a myriad of checkpoints, road blocks, military siege and separation walls. It has started to look more like a *Times* crossword puzzle.

The Middle East Quartet statement of 21 June 2010 has called the next important aspect, the blockade of Gaza, "unsustainable, unacceptable and not in the interest of any of those concerned". Now that is a key point. We are thinking from both sides. The recent measures by Israel to ease the blockade of Gaza are what are unfortunately categorized as a little too late

and far too little to work with. The outside world and the freedom-loving people of the world find this unacceptable.

The situation in occupied Jerusalem is not much different. Illegal separation walls, settlements and checkpoints even here block the integrity and unity of this age-old city — a city where, I may add, the Muslim Turkish sultans, when acting for the Muslim world, invited the much troubled Spanish diaspora of the Jewish nation to return and take a seat on the council of Jerusalem so that they could participate in the working of Jerusalem. That remains something outside the purview of the recent and current Muslim minority of that city.

Second in priorities is the requirement to stem the continuation of settlement activity. It is not only considered contrary to international law; it also a departure from the pledges made by Israel from time to time on the issue. This settlement activity is seen by much of the international community as a way and means for a major provocation. Settlement activity of recent times has accrued numerous patterns, the most worrying of which is the trend around East Jerusalem, where the status of centuries-old prayer places, mosques, churches and cemeteries of the Palestinian people is being altered in the name of excavation and creating new housing space.

I would say proudly here that when the last Jew left my city of Karachi in Pakistan and sold the synagogue for a condominium, a lot of us got together to stand and protect, until today, the Jewish cemetery in Karachi and ensure that none of it is ever violated. Nobody asked us to do that, but we feel a commitment to do it.

Only last Tuesday, Israel destroyed at least six Palestinian buildings in East Jerusalem. That is violence, and it continues with encouragement to some of the more enthusiastic settlers, who continue many forms of offense without any check or culpability. The recent self-imposed hiatus in settlement activity, which was never observed by Israel itself, is ending in September. That is hardly helping the cause of peace in the region. In itself the threat of settlements continues to cast a shadow on any meaningful peace process.

The plight of Palestinian people must end. The world cannot be a bystander to their miseries. Many international experts of the region have noted that the constituency for peace among the Palestinian population is constantly shrinking. It is being pointed out that more and more Palestinians see little justification in pursuing unequal peace with an unequal partner.

The present Israeli policies of blockades, separations and checkpoints can lead to the imprisonment of the entire Palestinian population as and when that may be deemed necessary. That continues to kill the peace process, as peace cannot be achieved between a prison guard and a prisoner. Israel must seize the fleeting opportunity for peace and convert the ongoing proximity talks into direct and meaningful negotiations with the aim of reaching a two-State solution.

I will take this opportunity to express concern at the lack of credible independent investigations of the Israeli aggression against the freedom flotilla in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Those people had embarked upon a noble mission, and, beyond all that has been said, that flotilla could have been escorted into an area where it could have disembarked peacefully and peacefully given up the goods that had been brought on board. We have no doubt of the humanitarian nature of that convoy, and to cast aspersions on its noble intentions is misleading.

I believe that the Turkish people, who were most of those affected, have been friends to Israel in the Muslim world and have worked hard to try to break this impossible impasse. For them to suffer such a consequence is, in my mind, unfortunate and, to say the least, not in the interest of friends who try to help.

It is a very simple thing: power knows no limitation. Normally, in the law of the jungle, when an elephant prevails and becomes overpowering and becomes an absolute killer, it is called a rogue elephant. No matter what one call it, the jungle moves away from it. Nature is divided; nature cannot bring together its forces of peace, harmony and existence. That is what is essential to understand — that power by itself must not be the goal of all means possible. In a civilized world it must be expressed in a way that is beneficial and not destructive.

I conclude by reiterating Pakistan's support for a lasting peace for the Arabs, Israelis and all the inhabitants of the region. We have a strong commitment to the realization of an independent, promised sovereign and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living in peace with

all its neigbours. We hope that, despite its reputation, this Council will bring us nearer to that objective.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the group of members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The thirty-seventh session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 18 to 20 May 2010, once again stressed that the situation in the Middle East will remain tense as long as Israel persists with its illegal policies and practices and hinders the peace efforts, and until a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of all aspects of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict is achieved. Such a settlement will be achieved only by ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and by enabling the Palestinian people to establish their independent, sovereign and viable State based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. In that regard, the OIC again calls on the international community, including the Security Council, to intensify its efforts to accelerate the Middle East peace process based on its responsibilities under the Charter.

While we meet to address issues related to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, including Israel's attack on the freedom flotilla and its blockade of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Israel is undertaking other illegal and provocative actions in the holy city of Jerusalem. These actions include the recent Israeli decision to build new settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and to demolish Palestinian homes in several neighbourhoods in order to alter the character, status and demographic composition of the city.

In addition to Israel's illegal colonial settlement activities, construction of the separation wall and demolition of Palestinian homes, it has revoked the residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites, including four elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council in order to deport them from Jerusalem. Moreover, Israel is continuing its illegal activities in the occupied West Bank, including imposing restrictions on the movement of persons and goods through numerous checkpoints, carrying out military incursions and illegally arresting Palestinians. Illegal Israeli settlers also continue to carry out provocations against the peaceful Palestinian population. These actions are illegal, discriminatory and provocative, and constitute flagrant violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

The international community, including the Security Council, should act immediately and effectively to compel Israel to cease its illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in East Jerusalem.

The illegal and inhuman blockade imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Gaza Strip for more than three years constitutes collective punishment of the Palestinian civilian population, violates international law and qualifies as a crime against humanity. More than 1.5 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip under the blockade continue to suffer from a scarcity of food, electricity, medicine and construction materials. They await the day when the international community will take prompt action to end their tragedy and suffering by compelling Israel to immediately and fully lift the blockade and open all border crossings to allow for the free movement of persons and goods to and from the Gaza Strip.

In response to the unjust Israeli blockade, the international flotilla of civilian activists set sail for Gaza to deliver humanitarian supplies and to break the blockade. However, Israel, with disregard for human rights and innocent lives, carried out a military attack in international waters against the peaceful international convoy, killing and injuring innocent, unarmed international peace activists.

As Council members realize, tinkering at the margins of the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip is not enough. The time has come to end the plight of more than 1.5 million Palestinians, lift the blockade and enable the people to live with dignity. Undoubtedly, the military attack on the freedom flotilla demands a prompt, full, impartial, transparent, independent and credible investigation conforming to international standards, based on the Security Council's presidential statement of 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9) and the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 2 June.

The OIC is deeply concerned by Israel's ongoing air and land violations of Lebanon's sovereignty, in breach of resolution 1701 (2006), and calls on Israel to withdraw fully from the remaining occupied Lebanese

land in the Shab'a farms, the Kfar Shuba hills and the northern part of Al-Ghajar village.

The OIC also supports the position of the international community reaffirming that all measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter the legal, physical and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Golan or its institutional structures, as well as Israeli measures to impose its jurisdiction and administration there, are null and void and have no international legal effect. The OIC demands that Israel abide fully and immediately by resolution 497 (1981) and fully withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967, in implementation of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The OIC group reiterates that peace in the Middle East will be achieved only by ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories that began in 1967 and by establishing the independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and by achieving a just solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

It is incumbent upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to shoulder its legal and moral responsibilities and take prompt and decisive actions and measures to implement relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. We must confront the challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset I wish to thank you, Madam, for having convened this open debate on the situation in the Middle East. The issue under discussion is of paramount importance, and this meeting is all the more important in the light of recent negative developments at the regional level. Those developments have again highlighted persistent practices to deny the Palestinian people the exercise of their rights to self-determination and to live free from the fear of the occupation and tragic suffering resulting from the ongoing siege of Gaza and the West Bank and the recent attack on the humanitarian flotilla of ships bound for Gaza.

The flotilla attack happened at a time when our memories were still fresh of the crimes and atrocities committed by the Israeli regime in its all-out attack against the people of Gaza in Operation Cast Lead, during which thousands of besieged innocent Palestinians, including women and children, lost their lives or were injured, and civilian infrastructure and facilities were willfully and systematically targeted. According to various reliable sources, in the course of that operation the Israeli army did not hesitate to use internationally prohibited and restricted weapons against civilian targets. Since then, the Israeli regime has continued to defy the will of the international community, while its inhuman policy of continued blockade against the Palestinians has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48) was an important step forward towards remedying the violations of the Israeli regime in Gaza. The report, when issued, brought hope of swift action by the relevant bodies of the United Nations, including this Council, to put an end to the culture of impunity for Israeli war crimes. So far, this hope has not been realized. If criminals were brought to justice, perhaps the barbaric attack on the humanitarian convoy would not have happened. Impunity for perpetrators of grave crimes, including war crime, occupation and crimes against humanity, is in itself a cause of and incentive for further atrocities.

It is regrettable to witness that the inaction or weak reaction of relevant responsible United Nations organs in dealing with the Israeli regime's illegal policies and practices have emboldened that dangerous regime to continue with its crimes and cruelty against the defenceless Palestinian people, especially innocent women and children. The blatant support of certain Powers for the Israeli regime is one of the bitterest realities of our world today. By blocking any single action against the inhumane policies and acts of the Israeli regime in this Council and using various tactics to undermine efforts in other United Nations bodies to hold it accountable, these criminals enjoy a merciless impunity in violating the internationally recognized human rights and humanitarian law.

Despite strong international condemnation, illegal settlements are being expanded much faster than in the past, and one tangible consequence is that the land of the Palestinians is shrinking and more and more Palestinian houses are being demolished, to be replaced by illegal settlements. This Monday alone, the

Israel regime, in defiance of global calls for halting the destruction of Palestinian shelters, levelled tents used by Palestinians as their homes in the northern West Bank. Israeli soldiers entered Al-Farisiya village and ordered the residents away before knocking structures down. The occupying forces also knocked down nine agricultural structures on the pretext that they had been put up without permits. The resumption of demolition work came as the international community strongly called for an end to the Israeli demolitions, describing them as illegal under international law.

We believe that the fundamental problem of this long-standing crisis is not in the lack of peace plans, which have arisen from time to time, one after the other, but is rooted in the continuation of the illegitimate occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and in the Israeli regime's intransigence to any single principle of international law. All these plans were doomed to failure because they all failed in one way or another to tackle the Palestinian problem at its root causes, including the occupation itself. Furthermore, the Israeli regime, since its unblessed inception, has attempted to cite external elements as factors in its failure to move to advance the so-called peace processes. These failed attempts have been manifestly aimed at diverting attention from the principled causes of the crisis and at evading responsibility for the crimes committed in Palestine.

In line with this policy, Israeli officials, instead of answering to world public opinion for their unparalleled record of non-compliance with all humanitarian and human rights principles and their long and dark history of crimes and atrocities, including occupation, aggression, militarism, State terrorism and crimes against humanity, have always made inflammatory remarks and baseless allegations against other countries. Now, it is widely recognized that the Israeli regime's clandestine development and unlawful possession of large stock of nuclear warheads and its constant threats to use them against certain countries pose a uniquely grave threat to regional and international peace and security.

The Israeli regime has persisted in its aggressive and expansionist policies towards Lebanon by constantly violating the latter's land, sea and air space and refusing to withdraw from Lebanese occupied land in the Shaba'a, the Kfar Shuba Hills and the northern part of Al-Ghajar village. It also continues its occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan. That regime should immediately and fully withdraw from these occupied territories in compliance with the most basic principles of international law and the United Nation Charter.

Attaining a peaceful and just settlement of the question of Palestine is imperative to the realization of a comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond. In our view, a lasting peace in Palestine and the region will be possible only through justice and an end to discrimination and to the illegal occupation of Palestinian and other Arab occupied territories. Today, we need to act collectively to demonstrate our all-out support for the cause of Palestine and to rally to the assistance of those who have been deprived of their rights. Let us hope that oppression and occupation will end and that justice and freedom prevail in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Before concluding, I would like to react to the reference made to my country by the representative of the Israeli regime. I would like to place on record once again that my delegation rejects the baseless allegations and distortions made in this Chamber that have been repeated so frequently that they have become a practice by the Israeli regime to distract the attention of the international community from its nuclear arsenal and its criminal policies and abhorrent atrocities in the region, including its recent heinous crimes against the people of Palestine in Gaza and against freedom-loving people in international waters near Gaza.

The President: I call on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Benitez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to express the Cuban delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Madam, preside over the Security Council and to commend you for the manner in which and your team have led the work of this organ this month.

I also affirm Cuba's full support for the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The situation in the Middle East remains complex and characterized by continued instability and insecurity. The ongoing illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories remains the principal obstacle to a just and lasting peace in the region.

The international community cannot stand idly by in the face of the untenable situation in the Gaza Strip. The imposition by Israel of road blocks and restrictions on the freedom of movement and on access of persons and goods, including humanitarian and medical supplies, have made the recovery and reconstruction of the area virtually impossible and have compounded even further the already precarious standard of living of the population.

Cuba reiterates its demand that Israel immediately, fully and unconditionally lift the cruel and illegal blockade of Gaza in order to allow for the free movement of supplies as well as permanent humanitarian access.

Cuba condemns the criminal attack perpetrated by the special forces of Israel in the early hours of 31 ay against a flotilla of boats in international waters, delivering humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people living in the Gaza Strip, causing the death and injury of a number of members of that flotilla. Likewise, Cuba supports the request of the Human Rights Council for the immediate carrying out, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, of a full, impartial, credible, transparent and independent international investigation into the Israeli attack on the humanitarian maritime convoy.

Israel cannot be allowed to continue to commit grave and flagrant violations of international law with impunity. The international community, including the Security Council, must demand that Israel comply with its international obligations.

Israel's settlement activities in the occupied territories, even after the partial and temporary moratorium announced in November 2009 have continued unabated. At present, more than 3,700 dwellings are being built, and more than 200 Palestinian dwellings have been demolished in order for those illegal activities to proceed.

Cuba expresses its profound concern at that continuing Israeli demolition of Palestinian dwellings and eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem, as well as other illegal acts of incitement, provocation and aggression carried out by extremist settlers against the Palestinian population and the Holy Sites. That now makes the situation very volatile and dangerous. The enormous physical, economic and social devastation caused by those illegal and destructive settlement practices profoundly impairs the peace process and may jeopardize the outcome for an agreement on the final status of Jerusalem.

Such measures and policies undertaken by Israel constitute grave and flagrant violations of international law, of the United Nations Charter, of many United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution 497 (1981), of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004.

The Security Council must urgently act in response to those dangerous illegal measures taken by Israel, which are geared to hindering and negating peace initiatives in order to continue to consolidate its illegitimate occupation of Palestinian territory and de facto to annex more Palestinian territories.

I wish to conclude by restating once more Cuba's position in support of a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the Middle East, one that puts an end to the occupation of all Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and that guarantees the exercise of the self-determination of the Palestinian people through the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): Madam President, let me first congratulate you on your country's presidency of the Council. I also wish to align my delegation with the statements by Egypt and Tajikistan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, respectively.

Israel's attack on the humanitarian freedom flotilla and its razing of Palestinian houses in Jerusalem are merely the latest examples in an ever-expanding list of aggressive and illegal behaviour towards the people of Palestine, and towards those who wish to aid them. The world continues to be outraged, but is unable to act.

In many parts of the world, inaction by the United Nations — exemplified by the mild presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9) — has sharpened the perception that there are two sets of standards, one for Israel and another for the rest of the world. That perception has strengthened the feeling of helplessness of many people in all parts of the world, leaving them open to attempts to radicalize them. It has also given rise to the

feeling that the United Nations is unable to defend the rights of the most marginalized, those who most require it.

It is therefore critical for the United Nations to take all necessary steps to restore its credibility. Of immediate importance is the speedy establishment of a United Nations-led investigation pursuant to the presidential statement. While we continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard, we are disconcerted that 52 days after the adoption of the presidential statement, the United Nations-led investigation still exists in the shadows. For example, it is still uncertain what the terms of reference of the investigation are.

In the meantime, Israel's military investigation has concluded. As expected, Israel has exonerated itself. As expected, they have employed the usual tactic of changing the facts on the ground, hoping that the results of that illegitimate investigation into an illegal act will be the basis of a future United Nations-led investigation. As expected, they have taken token ameliorative action, such as to ease the blockade against Gaza, hoping that the world will forget their actions.

But the world will not forget. On Malaysia's part, the Prime Minister has written to the President of the General Assembly requesting the re-convening of the tenth emergency special session. The Malaysian parliament has also adopted a motion that contains the same idea. This idea is consistent with the position adopted by the foreign ministers of the Arab League at their meeting on 2 July.

Some may say that we should be patient and prudent. We believe that patience is not inexhaustible and that it is imprudent to continue waiting for a train that is unlikely to come.

In addition, we believe that the emergency special session could also focus on the causes of the situation, of which the flotilla incident is merely a symptom, namely, the blockade of Gaza and the lack of progress towards a comprehensive settlement of the Middle Eastern problem. The blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza is a form of collective punishment forbidden by international law. It is immoral and illegal and has forced 1.5 million Gazans to live in abject conditions. We urge Israel to completely lift that inhumane blockade by opening the borders rather than to merely allow consumer goods in.

The emergency special session would also be a means of ensuring that Israel would be held accountable for its intransigence.

It is also increasingly alarming that the intransigence of Israel goes beyond the expansion of settlements. The following are some of the unlawful acts committed by Israel that further illuminate Israel's malicious intent to entrench its grip on Palestinian lands, which it has illegally occupied since 1967. The first is the construction of the separation wall, which snakes into Palestinian territory, thus annexing more Palestinian lands illegally. The second is the eviction of Palestinian families and demolition of Palestinian homes. The third is the Israeli military order on infiltration that went into effect in April this year, which authorizes the Israeli occupying forces to deport at least 25,000 Palestinian and Gazans residing in the West Bank.

These actions clearly violate numerous United Nations resolutions and international law and will make it more difficult to reach a final agreement on the basis of a two-State solution. Hence, the international community, including the Security Council, must hold Israel accountable for its illegal actions and put an end to this occupation.

Resolving these issues requires the international community to focus all its energy and efforts on restoring comprehensive peace in the region and the inalienable rights and dignity of the Palestinian people. That requires, among other things, the political will of the Council to bring into effect the Council's own resolutions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Rosales Díaz (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your leadership in the presidency of the Council and to thank you for having convened this debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. Allow me also to express my thanks to Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing to the Council this morning.

Nicaragua, as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, fully associates itself with what was stated by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Egypt in his capacity as Chairperson of the Movement.

Once again, Nicaragua reiterates its deepest condemnation of Israel's illegal occupation of all Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories and demands its immediate withdrawal. We condemn the Israeli policies and practices of building and not dismantling settlements. We condemn the inhumane blockade of Gaza and the policy of fragmentation of the West Bank and other Palestinian territories.

On 31 May 2010, the world was astonished to witness the cold-blooded, premeditated murder of nine unarmed civilian activists at the hands of the Israeli State's military forces, who, like terrorists, boarded vessels in international waters. More than 40 people were wounded, some so seriously that the death toll could still rise.

The Government and people of Nicaragua stand in solidarity with the families of the victims and join their voices to the call for justice without delay. We take this opportunity to express once again our solidarity with the people and Government of Turkey. We also call upon the other Governments whose citizens were among the victims to demand that justice be done.

With its customary impunity, the State of Israel has refused an international investigation and has described the murders of these individuals as self defence. Can it be that the illegal boarding of a humanitarian flotilla in international waters could be deemed an act of legitimate defence? As if it were not enough to attack a humanitarian flotilla in international waters, the Israeli soldiers displayed the most barbarous violence and were not content to merely neutralize their victims, instead riddling them with bullets. As proof, if it was necessary, the Government of Turkey revealed the content of the forensic reports and pictures of some of their citizens who were killed at point-blank range and others who suffered multiple bullet wounds, five of which were head wounds.

Fifty-one days have gone by since that attack. The Human Rights Council approved a resolution to undertake an independent international investigation, and the Security Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/9). However, Israel remains unpunished.

Nicaragua asks that, first, the Council demand the State of Israel to immediately lift the blockade on Gaza; secondly, an international investigative commission be established under United Nations auspices; thirdly, the State of Israel be required to provide full cooperation with such a commission as well as with the commission established by the Human Rights Council; and fourthly, those who masterminded the crimes and those who carried them out be brought to justice and punished.

These are but the minimal measures required to ensure legal security and justice. While lip service has certainly been paid to such measures over recent decades of violent Israeli occupation, they must now take precedence as soon as possible. Nicaragua hopes that such measures will bring a degree of peace to the families of the victims and give meaning to the idea of justice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Ms. Grau (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland is encouraged by the measures announced by Israel to ease the blockade against the Gaza Strip, as well as similar measures taken by Egypt. Those measures are a first step towards a predictable, lasting opening of crossing points between the Gaza Strip and the outside world for the passage of goods and persons, in accordance with resolution 1860 (2009).

Gaza's social fabric and economy have been severely damaged by the hostilities and by the blockade, to the particular detriment of the civilian population. The objective we must all pursue must be allowing the civilian population of Gaza to lead a normal life. The revitalization of the private sector and the resumption of exchanges between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are imperatives.

My country already raised the urgency of this question in the open debate held in July 2009 (*see S/PV.6171 (Resumption 1)*) and has in the meantime drafted the outlines of a mechanism to allow sustainable, predictable and regular access to Gaza while respecting the security needs of Israel. Switzerland therefore welcomes the efforts of Council members towards improving the situation and reiterates its readiness to support such efforts.

Switzerland notes the continued violations of international law by all parties to the conflict. The recent announcements of the resumption of construction activities in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are cause for serious concern. Those settlements have been established in

violation of international humanitarian law. Switzerland calls upon Israel to renew the freeze on construction activities in the West Bank and to extend it to East Jerusalem for an indefinite period of time.

My country also calls upon the Israeli authorities to rescind the expulsion orders for the East Jerusalem parliamentarians, which are contrary to human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Switzerland wishes also to denounce arbitrary detentions and intimidation of political opponents in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We call on the authorities to respect the rule of law and civil liberties and to continue the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process. This is necessary for the establishment of a Palestinian State serving the entire population and for the negotiation of a lasting settlement of the conflict with Israel. That conflict must come to an end: it is not only the security of Israel and of the Palestinians that is at stake, but also the credibility of the international security system.

The Clinton parameters, the Taba talks and the Geneva initiative are some of the promising efforts that indicate the outlines of a lasting solution. The State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have reaffirmed on many occasions that their goal is the birth of a Palestinian State. Hamas too has declared its acceptance of the 1967 borders. Switzerland counts on the support of Security Council members to ensure that those declarations are treated with seriousness. The Council should display continued determination to overcome the obstacles which, to date, have prevented this vision from becoming a reality.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for scheduling this very important open debate on the situation in the Middle East. I would also like to convey our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his insightful and comprehensive briefing this morning. I further thank Mr. Paul Badji, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for his statement.

I also wish to state that the Bangladesh delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Tajikistan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, respectively. In addition, I wish to briefly make certain points that Bangladesh believes to be of importance.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, has always been a major concern for the international community and for the United Nations. A durable and sustainable resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the issue of Palestine, which is the core of that long-lasting crisis, must therefore be our collective strategic objective. All Member States should pledge complete commitment to that objective and throw their full moral, diplomatic, political and economic support behind its early realization. Bangladesh is ready to play a constructive role in this collective endeavour to achieve a just, lasting and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the two-State principle. Bangladesh unites with the international community in reaffirming its full support for the Palestinian people in their just and legitimate struggle for self-determination and freedom from continued occupation, and it reiterates its long-standing position that the continued occupation of Palestine is the root cause of violence, unrest and destabilization in the region.

The people of Palestine are being denied their fundamental right to self-determination and to live freely in their own land, and displaced Palestinians have been denied their right to return home and live with dignity and safety. Unfortunately, it appears to be a collective failure on the part of the international community that their fundamental rights to self-determination and to a sovereign State have remained unrealized. It is also unfortunate that Israel, whose people had the experience of suffering and deprivation in the past, instead of avoiding those ugly practices, has continued to violate international humanitarian law by committing systematic human rights violations and imposing deprivation against the Palestinian people.

For example, less than two months back the Freedom Flotilla, a convoy of ships transporting humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli blockade in Gaza, was intercepted. Our thanks go to Israel, as it partially lifted some sanctions. However, a full and unconditional lifting of the sanctions on Gaza is a legitimate expectation of the global community and would be a step towards creating an environment of goodwill and trust among the neighbouring peoples of

Palestine and Israel. That is essential for a lasting peace in the region.

General Assembly and the Security Council, in their resolutions adopted over the years, have reconfirmed the occupying Power's obligation to ensure the basic human rights of the Palestinian people. My delegation believes that only full and sincere implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions can resolve the Palestinian crisis.

In conclusion, in order to achieve a lasting solution in the Middle East, it is very important to address the key issue, which is the prolonged and illegal occupation of Arab territories by Israel. The people of Palestine have been under illegal occupation over the past six decades. This occupation is extremely costly for the taxpayers of Israel and also for Israel's friends and neighbours in terms of resources, human lives and peace and stability. The solution, therefore, requires Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and all other occupied Arab lands.

Let me reiterate Bangladesh's full support for a lasting peace for all inhabitants of the region, both Arabs and Israelis, and our strong commitment to the realization of an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side by side and in peace with all its neighbours.

Finally, my delegation believes that the Road Map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions are the best guides for achieving a two-State solution.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Keegel (Sri Lanka): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Lynn Pascoe, for his briefing this morning. My delegation appreciates the opportunity given to us to once again to address the situation in the Middle East, particularly, the Palestinian question.

My delegation believes that a resolution of the Palestinian issue is crucial for restoring peace in the entire Middle East and would have implications elsewhere. My delegation has consistently supported a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue and has called on all sides to fully implement the resolutions adopted by the Council and the General Assembly regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the realization of the two-State solution.

We remain deeply concerned about the widespread suffering and hardship the Palestinian people continue to endure due to the economic blockade and about the ensuing grave situation in the occupied territories. While we note the relaxation of some restrictions by the Israeli Government, we call for the removal of all restrictions. Further relaxations could enhance the confidence level of all concerned and facilitate efforts to bring peace to the region. The Palestinian people have suffered for too long and continue to live under occupation. The denial of their fundamental right to statehood, recognized by the United Nations, due to the continued Israeli occupation has seriously affected progress on socio-economic indicators for the population in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

In that context, my delegation reiterates its long-held position that for peace to be viable and sustainable in the Palestinian territory, the occupying forces must withdraw to the 1967 borders and must end the economic blockade. We support a complete stop to the illegal expansion settlements. Changing the demographic character of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, would only increase tensions and animosities in the entire Middle East region.

The Palestinian Authority needs to continue the implementation of its security plan and make every effort within its abilities to improve law and order and to ensure its territory is not used for illegal attacks on Israel. Allegations of illegal arms flows must be investigated. Both sides must do everything possible to ensure the safety and security of civilians.

Sri Lanka reiterates its support for the Palestinian National Authority under the leadership of President Abbas. We stress the need to preserve and protect the national and democratic institutions that are vital to a future independent Palestinian State. We therefore urge the Palestinian groups to act speedily to reconcile and reunite within the framework of the Palestinian National Authority. Unity among the Palestinian people is its strength.

My delegation supports international efforts for the early resumption of direct negotiations, and believes that the unity of the Palestinian people is essential to this endeavour. We also remain concerned by the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the plight of Syrian detainees. We call for the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

My delegation reiterates its support for a lasting peace in the Middle East, including an early settlement of the Palestinian issue.

The President: I call on the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome this open debate on the Middle East and the Palestine question. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Our delegation expresses its deep concern at the humanitarian crisis and the deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory. The brutal and systematic aggression of the occupying Power, Israel, against the Palestinian people will make their development and self-determination impossible and hinders efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

The repeated violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by the forces of the occupying Power through the excessive use of force, collective punishment, the confiscation of land and the establishment and expansion of illegal settlements are flagrant violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

Operation Cast Lead and the criminal attack perpetrated by Israeli military forces in international waters against the freedom flotilla en route to Gaza have been condemned by the Human Rights Council in various resolutions. On 29 June 2010, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, condemned the expansionist plans of the State of Israel in Jerusalem, including the plan put forward by the Mayor of that city to demolish dozens of buildings that are home to hundreds of Palestinian families. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, expressed his concern at the decision of Israel to demolish more Palestinian homes and expand the settlements of Pisgat Ze'ev.

The political and military elite of the occupying Power is promoting all kinds of illegal activities in the aim of changing the geographic nature and the demographic composition of the Palestine territory, including the urban character and Arab and Islamic identity of East Jerusalem. These carefully planned activities constitute flagrant violations of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops. My Government also rejects the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, which is intended to fragment the unity, integrity and territorial contiguity of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. As is well known, in an advisory opinion the International Court of Justice declared this measure to be illegal.

In its presidential statement of 1 June (S/PRST/2010/9), the Security Council took note of the call of the Secretary-General for a "prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards" into this reprehensible incident. One month and 20 days have passed since then. It is a matter of concern that the panel to carry out this investigation has not yet been established.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as a State Member of the United Nations, expects the investigation to be genuinely impartial, credible and transparent and conforming to international standards, in contrast to the sham investigation that was carried out by the State of Israel to cover up the proof of its reprehensible crime.

The situation of the Palestine population in the Gaza Strip is a humanitarian catastrophe. As a consequence of the Israeli aggression known as Operation Cast Lead and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, 85 per cent of the population depends on humanitarian aid.

Preventing by force, as Israel is doing, the realization of cooperation in solidarity with the Palestinian people is an act of an unquestionable criminality. Venezuela demands once again an immediate and unconditional end to the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and the opening of all the

border crossings, thus allowing for the freedom of movement of goods and people and access for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has said that "the long-running closure imposed on the Gaza Strip is counterproductive, unsustainable and wrong. It punishes innocent civilians. It must be lifted by the Israeli authorities immediately". Why does the Security Council, which is mandated to address matters related to international peace and security, not adopt concrete and credible measures to bring to an end this genocidal blockade repudiated by all the peoples of the world?

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms it full support for the creation of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State within internationally recognized borders that guarantee the full exercise of the right of this heroic people to self-determination. This is an indispensable element for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

Israel's possession of nuclear weapons is a threat to international peace and security, in particular for the Middle East region. Its militaristic policies continue to ignore the repeated calls of the international community for Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to open its facilities to the international Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system.

In this context, Venezuela supports the decision adopted at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons recently held in New York, which resolved to call for an international conference on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East on 2012 in order to ban the development, possession and utilization of these weapons in the region.

The failure of the Israeli Government to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly must be addressed by this Council, including through the possible adoption of sanctions to persuade the Israeli political and military elite of their obligations to comply with the rules and principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments in order to achieve a solid and lasting peace in the Middle East. The State of Israel repeatedly violates the Charter of the United Nations and refutes through its actions the very nature of this Organization.

If the Security Council wishes to preserve its legitimacy as guarantor of peace and international security, it should adopt the measures necessary to achieve the end of the systematic slaughter of the Palestinian people by the State of Israel.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that Venezuela supports the request made by the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the issues under debate in the Security Council.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, acting head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Serrano: I thank you, Madam for giving the floor to the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

Since our last open debate in April on this issue (see S/PV.6298), two major developments have occurred: the Gaza flotilla events of 31 May and the beginning of proximity talks in early May. The Israeli military operation in the morning hours of 31 May in international waters against a flotilla sailing to Gaza resulted in the loss of nine lives and directed international attention to the unsustainable situation in Gaza. The European Union called for an immediate, full and impartial inquiry into these events, which should include credible international participation. Furthermore, the European Union declared its readiness to contribute to the implementation of a mechanism that would allow for full and regular access to Gaza based on a list of prohibited goods. The European Union High Representative discussed this matter with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership during her visit to the region last weekend and will present options to the European Union Foreign Affairs Council next Monday.

The European Union has welcomed the Israeli Government's recent announcement, which is a significant step forward in the review of Israel's policy on Gaza. The implementation of commitments undertaken will be key. The European Union is ready to help in the opening of the crossings, but has expectations linked to volumes, exports, the movement

of persons and security. These expectations are, of course, applicable to all existing crossings.

The objective remains the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), as well as the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, leading to the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of Gaza crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons. Israel's legitimate security concerns should also be addressed and Gilad Shalit must be released without delay and without conditions.

The launch of proximity talks between Israelis and Palestinians was welcomed by the European Union and its Quartet partners. We called on the parties to pursue them in good faith. These talks are a significant step towards the resumption of direct bilateral negotiations. The European Union supports the continued efforts of Senator Mitchell in this regard.

The overall aim of negotiations between the Parties is — within 24 months, as set out by the Quartet in March — a settlement that results in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. A comprehensive peace, which is a fundamental interest of the parties in the region and the whole international community, must be achieved on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the Road Map, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.

It is the view of the European Union that substantive discussion of all final status issues should commence as soon as possible. The implementation in the coming weeks of confidence-building measures on the ground would help in reaching this goal. The European Union calls on all parties to refrain from all provocative actions.

The European Union remains deeply concerned about the situation in East Jerusalem. Recent settlement activity, house demolitions, evictions and deportations underline the need to resolve through negotiations the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. We particularly deplore the recent house demolitions in East Jerusalem, which do not contribute to the establishment of an atmosphere of confidence, which is crucial at this stage of the negotiation process.

The European Union commends all initiatives that contribute to improve the well-being of the Palestinian population, especially in Gaza, such as the recent summer games held by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza. High Representative Ashton visited a summer camp on her recent visit to Gaza. This initiative can count on the continued political and financial support of the European Union and its member States. It serves as a much needed counterbalance to the backdrop of violence and poverty, and it provides Gazan children with recreational and educational opportunities. The European Union strongly condemns the recent attacks on UNRWA's summer camps.

The European Union expresses the hope that both parties to this conflict will engage in substantive discussion of final status issues so that, before the end of the current session of the General Assembly, we can take note of urgently needed progress towards peace and stability for the people of the Middle East.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): I should like first to congratulate you, Madam, on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July, and also to express my appreciation to you and the other members of the Security Council for this opportunity to address this Chamber on a matter that is of grave importance to all of us — the peace, security and stability of the Middle East.

The Philippines associates itself with the statement delivered this morning by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Align Movement, but at the same time wishes to stress certain points.

The Philippines position regarding the situation in the Middle East, specifically the Palestinian question, remains clear and consistent. The Philippines has always supported the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian State, and the Philippines has for many years joined in the global clamour for the establishment of a Palestinian homeland. In this regard, the Philippines sees merit in the two-State solution proposed by our partners for peace, and hopes that both Israel and Palestine will join hands together to achieve a long-lasting and durable solution to the problem.

The Philippines is sensitive to the legitimate security concerns of the State of Israel and the right of its people to live free from fear and free from harm. Indeed, the Philippines shares Israel's deep concern for its safety and its existence as a State. But as we have witnessed repeatedly, force only begets force.

The Philippines joins the Non-Aligned Movement and other partners in calling for the full and immediate lifting of the blockade leveled against Gaza to enable, to the extent possible, the free entry of food, medical supplies and other daily necessities. The Philippines believes that the continued existence of this blockade only succeeds in alienating and punishing the innocent Palestinians. Moreover, the residents of Gaza must also be allowed to move freely and to travel to their place of work or employment outside of Gaza without hindrance or harassment. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, particularly women and children, who suffer the most in this conflict. The United Nations therefore bears the inescapable responsibility to take the steps necessary to alleviate the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people.

The Philippines urges Israel and Palestine to re-establish their proximity talks and negotiations. It is a tortuous and fitful process, but it is the only viable course of action. The Philippines believes that only a diplomatic solution — that is, resumption of a sincere and meaningful dialogue between the two contending parties — can bring a just, comprehensive and enduring solution to this problem. The environment of conflict and anguish and the climate of fear should not be allowed to continue. Instead, both parties must promote a climate of trust and respect towards one another, as future neighbour States.

The Philippines strongly supports the role of the Madrid Quartet — the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations — the Arab Group, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and even non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups in ensuring that the momentum for peace talks does not fizzle out.

From a much broader perspective, all countries in the Middle East must be encouraged to find the fortitude to explore uncharted avenues to durable peace in their part of the world. The 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), through follow-on action to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, has opened a gateway through which other options could contribute towards a peaceful Middle East.

In conclusion, the Philippines applauds the Security Council for its full and continuous involvement in this issue. I wish to assure the Council and all of our partners in the United Nations that the Philippines stands ready to do its part to contribute to the building of a lasting peace in the region and to helping Israel and Palestine find a way forward towards peaceful and friendly coexistence.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): The situation in the Middle East remains of grave concern and continues to threaten stability far beyond the region. My Government attaches great value to the proximity talks between Israelis and Palestinians and trusts that they will pave the way for the resumption of bilateral negotiations leading to the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State. We also welcome the steps that are being taken in the review of Israel's policy on Gaza and look forward to the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), leading to the unconditional opening of Gaza crossings for humanitarian aid, commerce and people.

At the same time, Iceland remains deeply concerned at the continued house demolitions, evictions, settlement activities and the building of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territories and fears that this may lead to the erosion of the two-State solution. Only last week, the Jerusalem municipality approved the construction of 32 Israeli homes in a settlement in East Jerusalem. This policy of continued settlement activity is obviously not going to increase confidence in the peace process and must be brought to an end.

Also, the policy of house demolitions should be ceased immediately. Last week, again, the Jerusalem municipality demolished a number of Palestinian structures throughout East Jerusalem, forcibly displacing at least 25 people, including 12 children. These and additional demolitions in the Jordan Valley this week bring recorded demolitions in the occupied Palestinian territories this year to a total of 198

structures, resulting in the forced displacement of almost 300 Palestinians, half of them children, while 600 others have been otherwise affected.

While recognizing Israel's legitimate security interests, Iceland strongly believes the blockade of Gaza to be in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains deplorable as a result of the blockade. We align ourselves with those who call upon the Government of Israel to immediately and fully lift the blockade so that the people in Gaza can regain their dignity and revive their economy.

Iceland has strongly condemned the action leading to the loss of lives on 31 May during the Israeli raid on a flotilla sailing to Gaza and supports calls for an immediate, full and impartial inquiry into the incident, with international participation.

In conclusion, Iceland remains a firm supporter of a peaceful resolution of the conflict and the two-State solution. This requires genuine political willingness by both parties to reach an agreement on all final status issues, including borders, refugees and Jerusalem. It has been said by some supporters of the two-State solution that we are currently at one minute to midnight. The urgency is clear, but what remains unclear is whether the parties, in conjunction with the international community, are ready to take the measures that are necessary. Let us hope that we can join forces and overcome the remaining hurdles before the fateful hour strikes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank you, Madam President, for having convened this meeting to address the very important issue on the United Nations agenda. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for his briefing. Ecuador associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Government of Ecuador once again reaffirms its position on the Middle East conflict: there must be full compliance with the norms and principles of international law, in particular those relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The 1 June statement of the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2010/9) and resolution 14/1 adopted by the Human Rights Council on 2 June urge Israel to lift the blockade imposed on the Palestinian population of the Gaza Strip, to open all Israeli border crossings so as to allow free movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip, and to comply with the norms of international humanitarian law and with United Nations resolutions.

Ecuador is gravely concerned about Israel's systematic violation of those provisions, which simply blocks any rapprochement by the parties with a view to achieving a negotiated solution. Ecuador reiterates its determination to support all necessary efforts to prevent Israel from continuing to take illegal measures in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

It is the duty of the United Nations to take action towards a fair and satisfactory resolution of the Middle East problem. Here, the Security Council bears an inescapable responsibility to act. The States Members of the United Nations await such action, and now is the time to achieve positive results. We urge the parties to pave the way towards a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict on the basis of ongoing dialogue and fulfilment of their commitments under the Road Map. That would unquestionably lead to stability and peace in a region where the parties must coexist within agreed borders.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6364

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6364th meeting

Thursday, 22 July 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Vukašinović
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Ms. N'Gyema N'Dong
	Japan	Mr. Kimura
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Berezovsky
	Turkey	Mr. Gümrukçü
	Uganda	Mr. Kafeero
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-46053 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls its previous statements and resolutions on Guinea-Bissau and further recalls the events of 1 April 2010. The Council notes the efforts of the Government of Guinea-Bissau towards achieving stability in the country, but expresses concern at the current security situation and threats to constitutional order. The Council stresses the critical importance of the President, Government, political leaders, armed forces and people of Guinea-Bissau meeting their responsibilities to work towards national reconciliation, maintaining stability and constitutional order, fighting impunity, and respecting the rule of law.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of Guinea-Bissau to release immediately all those detained in the events of 1 April 2010 or prosecute them with full respect for due process.

"The Security Council stresses that genuine security sector reform requires the creation of effective professional and accountable security forces and respect for the rule of law. The Council therefore calls upon the Government of Guinea-Bissau to create the conditions for reform of the security services; calls upon the security forces, in particular the military, to fulfil their commitment to abide by civilian control; and calls upon both to implement current programmes for security sector reform on schedule.

"The Security Council expresses serious concern about the continued growth in drug trafficking, as well as organized crime, which threatens peace and security in Guinea-Bissau and in the subregion. The Council calls upon the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to create the necessary environment to ensure that actions to tackle drug trafficking and organized crime, including actions supported by the international community, are effective.

"The Security Council also recognizes the shared responsibility of States where drugs are produced and consumed, as well as transit States, to take measures to hold accountable those who engage in, or otherwise facilitate, drug trafficking through Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the Council welcomes the commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the European Union (EU), the United Nations and other partners for the immediate implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan on drug trafficking and organized crime, including options for targeted sanctions against those individuals identified as members or supporters of the drug trafficking network. The Council agrees to keep the situation under active review, and to consider appropriate action.

"The Security Council welcomes the Final Communique of the 38th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, expressing the need to promptly establish a mechanism for ensuring the safety of State civilian institutions in Guinea-Bissau. The Council invites the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the international community to cooperate fully with ECOWAS to that effect.

"The Security Council welcomes the continued engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission and also calls for the swift implementation of the United Nations framework for peace and development in Guinea-Bissau. The Council further welcomes the role of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau's efforts to coordinate actions by partners, in particular the African Union, ECOWAS, the EU and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, for their assistance in the area of security sector reform.

"The Security Council acknowledges the National Assembly's plans to convene a national conference on 'Conflicts in Guinea-Bissau:

Causes, Prevention, Resolution and Consequences', scheduled for January 2011, and underscores the need to conduct a genuine and inclusive political dialogue aimed at ensuring effective functioning of State institutions and national reconciliation. The Council welcomes, in that regard, efforts made by regional leaders, in particular President Pedro Pires of Cape Verde, to engage in a constructive dialogue with the leadership of Guinea-Bissau.

"The Council requests the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council, as appropriate, on progress made in addressing these issues as well as what further action may be required to support their continued implementation."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2010/15.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6365

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6365th meeting

Tuesday, 27 July 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Kafeero
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2010/382)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-46528 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2010/382)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Joint African Union-United Nations Special Representative for Darfur.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Gambari to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to the report of the Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, contained in document S/2010/382.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Gambari: Before starting my formal statement to the Council, I am most happy to be able to report the safe release earlier today of the two German international non-governmental organization (NGO) staff members who were kidnapped on 22 June in Nyala. They were picked up by an African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) helicopter in Kabkabiya at 11.30 Sudan time. Unfortunately, one staff member of the international NGO Samaritan's Purse kidnapped south of Nyala on 18 May remains in captivity. It is my hope that ongoing efforts to secure that individual's safe release will soon bear fruit.

I am honoured to be present here again today to brief the Council on the progress and challenges in UNAMID mandate implementation and in the achievement of the benchmarks presented to the Council in the Secretary-General's report of 16 November 2009 (S/2009/592). I would like to recall in this regard that the UNAMID strategic work plan defined benchmarks for the following four priority areas: a comprehensive political solution; a secure and stable environment; enhanced rule of law, governance and human rights; and a stabilized humanitarian situation.

In regard to the search for a comprehensive political solution, it is gratifying to note that this meeting is taking place immediately following the conclusion of two key meetings of international stakeholders engaged on the Sudan, including Darfur. The first was the first meeting of the Sudan Consultative Forum, which includes the E-6 — the special envoys of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus the European Union — all of Sudan's neighbours, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, held in Khartoum on 17 July 2010. The second relevant meeting is the just-concluded 237th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, held in Kampala, Uganda, in the margins of the ongoing African Union summit. Both meetings reiterated the need to ensure effective coordination of international engagement on the Sudan in a holistic manner, which I believe remains the objective of the Security Council.

As we speak here today, negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement are making steady progress in Doha under the facilitation of the AU-United Nations Mediator and the Government of Qatar. Furthermore, on 12 July, the second civil society forum was launched in Doha, attended by approximately 320 representatives of civil society organizations, internally displaced persons (IDPs), native administration and experts from all three Darfurian states. This has provided an important boost to the peace process. Although significant progress has been made, the continued absence of two of the major armed movements — the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) of Abdul Wahid — is deeply unfortunate. Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé is in contact with the leadership of both movements to urge them to join the

process and to discuss possible modalities for their participation.

In accordance with its mandate and in line with the requests contained in the communiqués adopted at the first meeting of the Sudan Consultative Forum on 17 July, as well as by the AU Peace and Security Council on 21 July, UNAMID has continued to support the efforts of Joint Chief Mediator Bassolé, including in the ongoing negotiations in Doha. Furthermore, UNAMID is currently finalizing its preparations for a process of internal political dialogue in Darfur to support and complement the Doha peace negotiations.

To this end, UNAMID will be engaging in a proactive manner with IDPs, refugees and the broader civil society, as well as with the newly elected legislators in the three States of the region, some 86 Darfurian members of the National Assembly in Khartoum, and Darfurians who have been appointed as ministers by President Al-Bashir, including those holding the key Ministries of Finance and Justice. The purpose of the dialogue will be to focus in detail on issues that affect a wide cross-section of Darfurians, and in particular on those issues that are the root causes of the Darfur conflict, including political and economic marginalization, land, justice and reconciliation. In this way, the dialogue will both inform and ensure that Darfurians buy in on the final elements of the peace agreements to be signed between the Government and armed movements.

In a similar positive development, UNAMID is nearing full deployment, with 88 per cent of military personnel, 70 per cent of police, including 13 out of 19 formed police units, and 75 per cent of civilian personnel in theatre. I would also like to highlight progress in the issuance of visas for UNAMID staff over the past couple of months. Notably, I would like to mention the arrival in the Mission of the new Force Chief of Staff, whose visa was granted by the Government recently after an unfortunate long delay. While this is encouraging, it is important for the Government of the Sudan to sustain this progress so that the rapid processing of visas for all nationalities is the norm rather than the exception.

Over time, the deployment of UNAMID has allowed the Mission to shift its focus towards harnessing its assets in pursuit of an effective implementation of its mandate and an early achievement of the benchmarks identified in November 2009. With a view to contributing to a stable and secure environment throughout Darfur, UNAMID has been able to expand its patrols both in number and range throughout the three Darfurian states, currently conducting on average more than 100 patrols per day, and to intensify its efforts in community policing. Furthermore, UNAMID's substantive sections have been providing support in the areas of human rights, the rule of law, local reconciliation and others through capacity-building, facilitation and advocacy with local institutions, political office holders, newly elected officials, native administration, civil society, community representatives and other stakeholders in Darfur so as to advance in the priority area of rule of law, governance and human rights in accordance with UNAMID's strategic work plan. However, challenges remain on the path to lasting peace and stabilization in Darfur.

When I last addressed the Council on 14 June (see S/PV.6338), I drew attention to the dire security situation in Darfur and the serious operational challenges facing UNAMID. It is with greater concern that I must report again today that, despite considerable efforts on the part of UNAMID, the security situation in Darfur has not greatly improved. Fighting between Government forces and the Justice and Equality Movement continues to be a major source of insecurity in several parts of Darfur. Government forces have been able to dislodge JEM from its traditional stronghold in Jebel Moon, Western Darfur, and the Adula mountains in Southern Darfur, and to disrupt its main supply routes to El Fasher and Nyala. Of late, JEM convoys have been sighted even in Northern Darfur moving northwards, possibly towards the Libyan border.

The resumption of fighting was accompanied by JEM withdrawal from the peace talks in Doha. The movement is yet to re-engage in the talks, despite efforts to bring it back into the negotiating process. In an apparent attempt to take advantage of the Government's military engagement with JEM, the Abdul Wahid faction of the Sudan Liberation Army attacked Sudanese Armed Forces positions in the Jebel Marra area around 29 May. This has led to sporadic fighting between the two parties, civilian casualties and the displacement of several communities.

In addition to these very troubling incidences of military confrontation, intense intercommunal fighting has been occurring between the Misseriya and Nawaiba

communities — both semi-nomadic Arab tribes — which have been fighting over fertile land along the border of Southern and Western Darfur. This fighting resulted in an estimated 126 casualties in May and 133 in June, compared to a total of 134 fatalities attributable to tribal clashes throughout the whole of 2009. On 29 June, a peace agreement was reached between the two tribes, according to which the parties agreed to disarm their militia, pay compensation to the families of the victims, and establish a joint security task force to restore law and order. As I address the Council today, it is fortunate that this agreement is largely holding, and fighting between the groups has largely ceased.

It is with grave concern that I have to report a spike in criminal acts and attacks against United Nations and humanitarian personnel. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2010/382), during the previous year UNAMID peacekeepers were attacked on 28 occasions, resulting in 10 dead and 26 injured. We have also seen two instances of kidnapping of UNAMID personnel and six cases involving humanitarian colleagues. In the most recent event, on 21 June armed men, apparently in military fatigues, attacked UNAMID troops guarding a construction site in Nertiti, Western Darfur. In the exchange of fire, three UNAMID military personnel from Rwanda and three attackers lost their lives. I would like to take this opportunity to underscore once again that such attacks against peacekeepers constitute war crimes, and we call on the Government of the Sudan to arrest, try and bring the perpetrators to justice.

As we speak here today, my colleagues in Darfur are working to urgently solve yet another incident involving UNAMID-related staff. Yesterday, 26 July, a UNAMID helicopter went missing while transporting members of the Security Arrangements Committee of the Liberation and Justice Movement to locations in Southern Darfur. Fortunately, earlier today we were able to establish contact with three of the four crew members of the helicopter, as well as one international staff member, who are reported to be in safety at a location controlled by the Government of the Sudan south of Menawashi. However, the captain of the helicopter remains unaccounted for. UNAMID is working with the Government and the movements in the area to try to locate the missing pilot.

In response to the attacks on UNAMID uniformed personnel, I have met with high-level Government officials, including the Vice-President, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and the new State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, to reiterate earlier demands that the Government conduct thorough and timely investigations into the attacks and prosecute those involved. Following my meetings, on 26 July UNAMID received a note verbale from the Government of the Sudan in which it condemned the attacks on UNAMID troops, informed the Mission that it would establish an emergency reaction force, and enhance cooperation and exchange of information with UNAMID to mitigate remaining security risks. While this represents a welcome move by the Government on this matter, the support of Member States, including this Council, is kindly sought to impress upon the Government the need to urgently address the continued impunity of such attacks.

It is also in this context that, on 5 July, I convened a retreat of the Special Envoys to the Sudan in an attempt to enhance the shared understanding of the achievements and challenges at hand. I was very much encouraged by the high participation, as a total of 19 delegations came to El Fasher, including my colleagues Joint Chief Mediator Bassolé and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Menkerios, to review the general situation on the ground and discuss the security situation in Darfur, the peace talks in Doha and facilitation of early recovery. The meeting expressed full support for the work of the Joint Chief Mediator and UNAMID and underscored the need for full humanitarian access and freedom of movement.

The participants also observed the link between security and sustainable voluntary returns, and highlighted the need to achieve lasting peace through a comprehensive negotiated settlement. This was also endorsed in the respective communiqués of the Sudan Consultative Forum of 17 July and the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council in Kampala on 21 July.

Regrettably, progress achieved over the past year towards a stabilized humanitarian situation has been slowed in recent weeks as access to the affected population in areas of recent fighting — in particular to large areas of eastern Jebel Marra and in Southern Darfur — has remained problematic. I am particularly concerned at the situation in eastern Jebel Marra, where, following the onset of the fighting between the

Government of the Sudan and SLA-Abdul Wahid in February, all NGOs operating in the area closed down their activities and relocated their international staff. Consequently, the provision of humanitarian assistance has ceased, creating gaps in the delivery of vital services and livelihoods. I therefore reiterate my call on all parties to respect UNAMID's mandate and to allow UNAMID and the humanitarian community full access to the affected population.

UNAMID continues to engage in negotiations with Sudanese Government authorities at all levels and with the armed movements to ensure wider access, including for humanitarian assessment missions to deep field locations. Recognizing the apparent disconnect in the transmission of directives on access and communication between Khartoum and Sudanese Government officials on the ground, we have also encouraged the Government to improve information flow throughout the chain of command.

Similarly, during the recent meeting of the High-level Committee on humanitarian issues on 19 July in Khartoum — comprising the Government, the United Nations country team, donors, NGOs and UNAMID — its participants decided to establish a subcommittee on safety and security, which is to meet on a weekly basis to address the enhanced security of the humanitarian community and restrictions of movement.

In this context, I also wish to report that UNAMID continues to engage with the Government at all levels to develop a shared understanding of the conditions for the unrestricted use of UNAMID's tactical helicopters in full support of its core mandate activities. As outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, those assets are yet to become fully operational, beyond training and crew activities, as a result of Government restrictions. Accordingly, practical results on the ground since the acquisition of those assets have not yet been registered. It is my firm belief that, in order to maximize the added value of the Mission for Darfur, and for the Sudan in general, it is essential that the Sudanese authorities show increased commitment in practical terms to providing an enabling environment for UNAMID. I ask the Council for its support in this regard.

Economic marginalization and competition over scarce resources are among the major root causes of the Darfur conflict. The United Nations country team and UNAMID have an important role to play in assisting the Government and local authorities to take advantage of existing pockets of peace, where these exist, to stimulate livelihood opportunities. To this end, UNAMID will continue in its efforts to provide a secure environment conducive to voluntary and sustainable returns and to support the United Nations country team's efforts through the use of our assets within our capacities. However, our efforts cannot supplant the primary responsibility of the Government for recovery and development. Indeed, the Government could go a long way towards addressing the root causes of the conflict in Darfur if it committed firmly to increasing public investment in the region.

As I address the Council today, the Darfur peace process is at a critical juncture. It is perhaps fortunate that, at precisely the same time as the security situation in Darfur has deteriorated, prospects for a negotiated settlement appear to have slightly improved. Civil society is now more involved in peace talks than ever, the Government of the Sudan is demonstrating renewed commitment to the negotiations in Doha, and the leaders of most armed opposition movements are either participating in or are expressing an interest in participating in those talks. A comprehensive agreement, combined with improvements in the security situation, is vitally important if UNAMID is to implement its core mandates of protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian assistance. But to be fully effective, UNAMID could also benefit from more support in the form of utility helicopters, a transport company, an aerial surveillance unit, and the lifting of restrictions that prevent the Mission from carrying out its mandate effectively and responding swiftly to emergencies.

As I hope I have been able to convey in my briefing, progress in achieving the UNAMID benchmarks has been varied. I should like to highlight that significant progress in this regard is contingent not only on the full deployment and capacities of the Mission, but also on the willingness of all parties in Darfur to facilitate and contribute to UNAMID mandate implementation and to effectively work towards lasting peace and stabilization.

In this vein, I should like to conclude my remarks by calling on the Council to continue to support dedicated and focused efforts to address the root causes of the Darfur conflict in a holistic manner through the activities of UNAMID and of my colleague Djibril Bassolé and in collaboration with the AU High-level

Implementation Panel. I also wish to request the Council to renew its appeal to the Justice and Equality Movement to rejoin and to SLA-Abdul Wahid to urgently engage in the Doha peace talks in the interests of peace in Darfur, without preconditions, in order to conclude and finalize a peace agreement before the end of the current year. We suspect that, if this is not achieved, the attention of the international community will likely shift to the issue of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the referendum between Northern and Southern Sudan.

Finally, I urge the Council to lend its weight and appeal to all parties to demonstrate restraint and to refrain from actions that are likely to further complicate an already complicated security situation and the search for durable peace in Darfur.

The President: I thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6366

Provisional

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

6366th meeting

Friday, 30 July 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mr. Moretti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Japan	Mr. Sumi
	Lebanon	Mr. Khechab
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	Turkey	Mr. Mattuoglu
	Uganda	Mr. Kafeero
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2010/382)

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10-46830 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2010/382)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them document S/2010/402, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/382 containing the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1935 (2010).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.